

METTLER TOLEDO INTERNATIONAL INC/
Form 10-K
February 09, 2018

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549
Form 10-K
(Mark One)

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d)
OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2017

OR
 TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d)
OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
For the transition period from _____ to _____

Commission file number 001-13595
Mettler-Toledo International Inc.
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)
Delaware 13-3668641
(State or other jurisdiction of (I.R.S. Employer
incorporation or organization) Identification No.)
1900 Polaris Parkway
Columbus, OH 43240
and
Im Langacher 44
CH 8606 Greifensee, Switzerland
(Address of principal executive offices) (Zip Code)
1-614-438-4511 and +41-44-944-22-11
(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of Each Class	Name of Each Exchange on Which Registered
Common Stock, \$0.01 par value	New York Stock Exchange
Preferred Stock Purchase Rights	New York Stock Exchange

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: NONE

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Website, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§ 232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K (§ 229.405 of this chapter) is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K. Yes No

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Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of “large accelerated filer,” “accelerated filer” and “smaller reporting company” in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer <input type="checkbox"/>	Accelerated filer <input type="checkbox"/>	Non-accelerated filer <input type="checkbox"/>	Smaller reporting company <input type="checkbox"/>	Emerging growth company <input type="checkbox"/>
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(Do not check if a smaller reporting company)

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the Exchange Act

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Act). Yes No

As of February 5, 2018 there were 25,472,835 shares of the registrant’s Common Stock, \$0.01 par value per share, outstanding. The aggregate market value of the shares of Common Stock held by non-affiliates of the registrant on June 30, 2017 (based on the closing price for the Common Stock on the New York Stock Exchange as of the last business day of the registrant’s most recently completed second fiscal quarter, June 30, 2017) was approximately \$15.1 billion. For purposes of this computation, shares held by affiliates and by directors of the registrant have been excluded. Such exclusion of shares held by directors is not intended, nor shall it be deemed, to be an admission that such persons are affiliates of the registrant.

Documents Incorporated by Reference

Document	Part of Form 10-K Into Which Incorporated
Certain Sections of the Proxy Statement for 2018 Annual Meeting of Shareholders	Part III

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 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

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FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS DISCLAIMER

You should not rely on forward-looking statements to predict our actual results. Our actual results or performance may be materially different than reflected in forward-looking statements because of various risks and uncertainties. You can identify forward-looking statements by terminology such as “may,” “will,” “could,” “would,” “should,” “expect,” “plan,” “anticipate,” “intend,” “believe,” “estimate,” “predict,” “potential,” or “continue.”

We make forward-looking statements about future events or our future financial performance, including earnings and sales growth, earnings per share, strategic plans and contingency plans, growth opportunities or economic downturns, our ability to respond to changes in market conditions, planned research and development efforts and product introductions, adequacy of facilities, access to and the costs of raw materials, shipping and supplier costs, gross margins, customer demand, our competitive position, pricing, capital expenditures, cash flow, tax-related matters, the impact of foreign currencies, compliance with laws, and effects of acquisitions.

Our forward-looking statements may not be accurate or complete, and we do not intend to update or revise them in light of actual results. New risks also periodically arise. Please consider the risks and factors that could cause our results to differ materially from what is described in our forward-looking statements. See in particular “Factors Affecting Our Future Operating Results” and “Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations.”

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PART I

Item 1. Business

We are a leading global supplier of precision instruments and services. We have strong leadership positions in all of our businesses and believe we hold global number-one market positions in most of them. We are recognized as an innovation leader and our solutions are critical in key research and development, quality control, and manufacturing processes for customers in a wide range of industries including life sciences, food, and chemicals. Our sales and service network is one of the most extensive in the industry. Our products are sold in more than 140 countries and we have a direct presence in approximately 40 countries. With proven growth strategies and a focus on execution, we have achieved a long term track record of strong financial performance.

Our business is geographically diversified, with net sales in 2017 derived 31% from Europe, 39% from North and South America, and 30% from Asia and other countries. Our customer base is also diversified by industry and by individual customer.

Mettler-Toledo International Inc. was incorporated as a Delaware corporation in 1991 and became a publicly traded company with its initial public offering in 1997.

Business Segments

We have five reportable segments: U.S. Operations, Swiss Operations, Western European Operations, Chinese Operations, and Other. See Note 17 to the audited consolidated financial statements and Item 7. Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations under "Results of Operations by Reportable Segment" for detailed results by segment and geographic region.

We manufacture a wide variety of precision instruments and provide value-added services to our customers. Our principal products and services are described below. We also describe our customers and distribution, sales and service, research and development, manufacturing, and certain other matters. These descriptions apply to substantially all of our products and related reportable segments.

Laboratory Instruments

We make a wide variety of precision laboratory instruments in the sample preparation, synthesis, analytical bench top, and material characterization areas. Our portfolio includes laboratory balances, liquid pipetting solutions, automated laboratory reactors including real-time analytics, titrators, physical value analyzers, thermal analysis systems, and other analytical instruments, such as UV/VIS spectrophotometers, moisture analyzers, and density refractometers. The laboratory instruments and related service business accounted for approximately 50% of our net sales in 2017, 49% in 2016, and 48% in 2015.

Laboratory Balances

Our laboratory balances have weighing ranges from one ten-millionth of a gram up to 64 kilograms. To cover a wide range of customer needs and price points, we market our balances in a range of product tiers offering different levels of functionality. We also provide filter weighing and powder dosing automated systems. Based on the same weighing technology platform, we also manufacture mass comparators, which are used by weights and measures regulators as well as laboratories to ensure the accuracy of reference weights. Laboratory balances are primarily used in the pharmaceutical, food, chemical, cosmetics, academia, and other industries.

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Pipettes

Pipettes are used in laboratories for dispensing small volumes of liquids. We operate our pipette business with the Rainin and Biotix brand names. We develop, manufacture, and distribute advanced pipettes, tips, tubes, and accessories, including single- and multi-channel manual and electronic pipettes. We maintain service centers in the key markets where customers periodically send their pipettes for certified recalibrations. Our principal end markets are pharmaceutical, biotech, and academia.

Analytical Instruments

Titration systems measure the chemical composition of samples and are used in environmental and research laboratories as well as in quality control labs in the pharmaceutical, food and beverage, and other industries. Our high-end titrators are multi-tasking models, which can perform two determinations simultaneously on multiple vessels. Our offering includes robotics to automate routine work in quality control applications.

Thermal analysis systems measure material properties as a function of temperature, such as weight, dimension, energy flow, and viscoelastic properties. Thermal analysis systems are used in nearly every industry, but primarily in the plastics and polymer industries and increasingly in the pharmaceutical industry.

pH meters measure acidity in laboratory samples. We also sell density and refractometry instruments, which measure chemical concentrations in solutions. In addition, we manufacture and sell moisture analyzers, which precisely determine the moisture content of a sample by utilizing the loss on drying method, and UV/VIS spectrophotometers that optimize spectroscopic workflows.

Laboratory Software

LabX, our PC-based laboratory embedded software platform, manages and analyzes data generated by our balances, titrators, pH meters, moisture analyzers, and other analytical instruments like UV/VIS spectrophotometers. LabX provides full network capability; assists with workflow automation; has efficient, intuitive protocols; and enables customers to collect and archive data in compliance with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's traceability requirements for electronically stored data (also known as 21 CFR Part 11).

Automated Chemistry Solutions

Our current automated chemistry solutions focus on selected applications in the chemical and drug discovery process. Our automated lab reactors and in situ analysis systems are considered integral to the process development and scale-up activities of our customers. Our on-line measurement technologies, based on infrared and laser light scattering, enable customers to monitor chemical reactions and crystallization processes in real time in the lab and plant. In situ samples allow overnight sampling and testing. We believe that our portfolio of integrated technologies can bring significant efficiencies to the development process, enabling our customers to bring new chemicals and drugs to market faster.

Process Analytics

Our process analytics business provides instruments for the in-line measurement of liquid and gas parameters used primarily in the production process of pharmaceutical, biotech, beverage, microelectronics, chemical, and refining companies, as well as power plants. Close to half of our process analytics sales are to the pharmaceutical and biotech markets, where our customers need fast and secure scale-up and production that meet the validation processes required for GMP (Good Manufacturing Processes) and other regulatory standards like the USP (US Pharmacopoeia) regulations for ultrapure water quality. We are a leading solution provider for liquid analytical measurement to control and optimize production processes. Our solutions include sensor and analyzer technology for measuring pH,

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dissolved oxygen, carbon dioxide, conductivity, turbidity, ozone, total organic carbons, bioburden, sodium, and silica, as well as laser analyzers for gas measurement. Intelligent sensor diagnostics capabilities enable improved asset management solutions for our customers to reduce process downtime and maintenance costs. Our instruments offer leading multi-parameter capabilities and plant-wide control system integration, which are key for integrated measurement of multiple parameters to secure production quality and efficiency. With a worldwide network of specialists, we support customers in critical process applications, compliance, and systems integration questions.

Industrial Instruments

We manufacture numerous industrial weighing instruments and related terminals and offer dedicated software solutions for the pharmaceutical, chemical, food, discrete manufacturing, and other industries. In addition, we manufacture metal detection, x-ray, and other end-of-line product inspection systems used in production and packaging. We supply automatic identification and data capture solutions, which integrate in-motion weighing, dimensioning, and identification technologies for transport, shipping, and logistics customers. We also offer heavy industrial scales and related software. The industrial instruments and related service business accounted for approximately 42% of our net sales in 2017 and 2016 and 43% in 2015.

Industrial Weighing Instruments

We offer a comprehensive line of industrial scales and weighing devices, such as bench scales, floor scales, and weigh modules for weighing loads from a few grams to several thousand kilograms in applications ranging from measuring materials in chemical production to quality completeness control in discrete manufacturing to weighing packages at the end of the line. Our products are used in a wide range of industrial applications, such as counting, formulating and mixing ingredients, and quality control.

Industrial Terminals

Our industrial scale terminals collect data and integrate it into manufacturing processes, helping to automate them. Our terminals allow users to remotely download formulation recipes or access setup data and can minimize downtime through predictive rather than reactive maintenance.

Transportation and Logistics

We supply automatic dimensional measurement and data capture solutions, which integrate in-motion weighing, dimensioning, and identification technologies. With these solutions, customers can measure the weight and cubic volume of packages for appropriate billing, load management, and quality control. Our solutions also integrate into customers' information systems.

Vehicle Scale Systems

Our primary heavy industrial products are scales for weighing trucks or railcars (i.e., weighing bulk goods as they enter or leave a factory or at a toll station). Heavy industrial scales are capable of measuring weights up to 500 tons and permit accurate weighing under extreme environmental conditions. We also offer advanced computer software that can be used with our heavy industrial scales to facilitate a broad range of customer solutions and provides a complete system for managing vehicle transaction processing.

Industrial Software

We offer software that can be used with our industrial instruments. Examples include FreeWeigh.Net, statistical quality control software; FormWeigh.Net, our formulation/batching software; and DataBridge, which supports the operation of vehicle scales. FreeWeigh.Net and FormWeigh.Net provide full network capability and enable customers to collect and archive data in compliance with FDA 21 CFR Part 11.

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Product Inspection

Increasing safety and consumer protection requirements are driving the need for more sophisticated end-of-line product inspection systems (e.g., for use in food processing and packaging, pharmaceutical, packaged consumer goods, and other industries). We are a leading global provider of metal detectors, x-ray and camera-based imaging equipment, checkweighers, and track-and-trace solutions that are used in these industries. Metal detectors are most commonly used to detect fine particles of metal that may be contained in raw materials or may be generated by the manufacturing process itself. X-ray inspection is used to detect metallic contamination in applications unsuited to metal detectors and many types of non-metallic contamination, such as glass, calcified bone, stones, and pits. Our x-ray systems are also used for mass control and for determining and controlling the fat content in meat. Our camera-based vision inspection solutions provide in-line inspection of package quality, labels, and content, which are needs for food and beverage, consumer goods, and pharmaceutical companies. Vision inspection systems with associated specialist software enable our pharmaceutical customers to implement traceability and serialization tracking, as required by regulation. Checkweighers are used to control the filled weight of packaged goods such as food, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics. All of our technologies are integrated with material handling systems to ensure the correct presentation of the customer's product to the device and the secure rejection of non-conforming product. Our technologies may also be used together as components of integrated packaging lines. ProdX Inspect is our quality and productivity control software for helping customers comply with regulations and optimize process efficiency, either as a stand-alone solution or through integration with the customer's manufacturing and enterprise systems.

Retail Weighing Solutions

Supermarkets, hypermarkets, and other food retail businesses make use of multiple weighing and food labeling solutions for handling fresh goods (such as meats, vegetables, fruits, or cheeses). We offer networked scales and software, which can integrate backroom, counter, self-service, and checkout functions and can incorporate fresh goods item data into a supermarket's overall food item and inventory management system. The scale screen display allows for in-store marketing and can help encourage consumers in the store to make more purchase decisions at the point of sale. In addition, we offer stand-alone scales for basic counter weighing and pricing, price finding, and printing. The customer benefits of our retail solutions are in the areas of enterprise-wide article and price management, merchandising, and regulatory compliance. In North America and select other markets, our offering also includes automated packaging and labeling solutions for the meat backroom, which are fully integrated with the scales in the store. The retail business accounted for approximately 8% of our net sales in 2017 and 9% in 2016 and 2015.

Customers and Distribution

Our principal customers include companies in the following key end markets: the life science industry (pharmaceutical and biotech companies, as well as independent research organizations); food and beverage producers; food retailers; chemical, specialty chemicals, and cosmetics companies; the transportation and logistics industry; the metals industry; the electronics industry; and the academic community.

Our products are sold through a variety of distribution channels. Generally, more technically sophisticated products are sold through our direct sales force, while less complicated products are sold through indirect channels. Our sales through direct channels exceed our sales through indirect channels. A significant portion of our sales in the Americas is generated through indirect channels, including sales of our Ohaus-branded products. Ohaus-branded products target markets, such as the educational market, in which customers are interested in lower cost, a more limited set of features, and less comprehensive support and service.

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We have a diversified customer base, with no single end-customer accounting for more than 1% of 2017 net sales.

Sales and Service

Market Organizations

We maintain geographically focused market organizations around the world that are responsible for all aspects of our sales and service. The market organizations are customer-focused, with an emphasis on building and maintaining value-added relationships with customers in our target market segments. Each market organization has the ability to leverage best practices from other units while maintaining the flexibility to adapt its marketing and service efforts to account for different cultural and economic conditions. Market organizations also work closely with our producing organizations (described below) by providing feedback on manufacturing and product development initiatives, new product and application ideas, and information about key market segments.

We have one of the largest and broadest global sales and service organizations among precision instrument manufacturers we compete against. At December 31, 2017, our sales and service group consisted of approximately 7,600 employees in sales, marketing and customer service (including related administration), and post-sales technical service, located in approximately 40 countries. This field organization has the capability to provide service and support to our customers and distributors in major markets across the globe. This is important because our customers increasingly seek to do business with a consistent global approach.

Service

Our service business continues to be successful with a focus on providing uptime and calibration services, as well as further expansion of our offerings to provide value-added services for a range of market needs, including regulatory compliance, performance enhancements, application expertise and training, and remote services. We have a unique offering to our pharmaceutical customers in promoting the use of our instruments in compliance with FDA and other international regulations, and we can provide these services to most customers' locations around the world. Our global service network is also an important factor in our ability to expand in emerging markets. We estimate that we have the largest installed base of weighing instruments in the world. Service (representing service contracts, on demand services, and replacement parts) accounted for approximately 22% of our net sales in 2017, 2016, and 2015.

Beyond revenue opportunities, we believe service is a key part of our solution offering and helps significantly in customer retention. The close relationships and frequent contact with our large customer base allow us to be the trusted advisor of our customers, which provides us with high-quality sales opportunities as well as innovative product and application ideas.

Research and Development and Manufacturing

Producing Organizations

Our research, product development, and manufacturing efforts are organized into a number of producing organizations. Our focused producing organizations help reduce product development time and costs, improve customer focus, and maintain technological leadership. The producing organizations work together to share ideas and best practices, and there is a close interface and coordinated customer interaction among marketing organizations and producing organizations.

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Research and Development

We continue to invest in product innovation to provide technologically advanced products to our customers for existing and new applications. Over the last three years, we have invested \$368 million in research and development (\$129.3 million in 2017, \$120.0 million in 2016, and \$119.1 million in 2015), which is approximately 5% of net sales for each year. Our research and development efforts fall into two categories:

technology advancements, which generate new products or features and increase the value of our products. These advancements may be in the form of enhanced or new functionality, new applications for our technologies, more accurate or reliable measurement, additional software capability, or automation through robotics or other means. cost reductions, which reduce the manufacturing cost of our products through better overall design and/or improve the ease of serviceability.

We devote a substantial proportion of our research and development budget to software development. This includes software to process the signals captured by the sensors of our instruments, application-specific software, and software that connects our solutions into customers' existing IT systems. We closely integrate research and development with marketing, manufacturing, and product engineering. We have approximately 1,300 employees in research and development and product engineering in countries around the globe.

Manufacturing

We are a worldwide manufacturer, with facilities principally located in China, Switzerland, the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Mexico. We emphasize product quality in our manufacturing operations, and most of our products require very strict tolerances and exact specifications. We use an extensive quality control system that is integrated into each step of the manufacturing process. All major manufacturing facilities have achieved ISO 9001 certification. We believe that our manufacturing capacity is sufficient to meet our present and currently anticipated demand. We expect to make net investments in new or expanded manufacturing facilities of \$40 million to \$50 million over the next two years.

We generally manufacture critical components, which are components that contain proprietary technology. When outside manufacturing is more efficient, we contract with other manufacturers for certain nonproprietary components. We use a wide range of suppliers. We believe our supply arrangements are adequate and that there are no material constraints on the sources and availability of materials. From time to time, we may rely on a single supplier for all of our requirements of a particular component. Supply arrangements for electronic components are generally made globally.

Backlog; Seasonality

Our manufacturing turnaround time is generally short, which permits us to manufacture orders to fill for most of our products. Backlog is generally a function of requested customer delivery dates and is typically no longer than one to two months.

Our business has historically experienced a slight amount of seasonal variation, particularly the high-end laboratory instruments business. Traditionally, sales in the first quarter are slightly lower than, and sales in the fourth quarter are slightly higher than, sales in the second and third quarters. Fourth quarter sales have historically generated approximately 28% to 30% of our net sales. This trend has a somewhat greater effect on income from operations than on net sales because fixed costs are generally incurred evenly across all quarters.

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Employees

Our total workforce was 15,400 throughout the world, including 13,800 employees and 1,600 temporary personnel, as of December 31, 2017, and includes approximately 5,600 in Europe, 4,700 in North and South America, and 5,100 in Asia and other countries.

We believe our employee relations are good, and we have not suffered any material employee work stoppage or strike during the last five years. Labor unions do not represent a substantial number of our employees. Approximately 600 employees in Germany and France are represented by unions.

Sustainability

Sustainability touches all aspects of our business, from designing and producing our products, to selling and delivering them to our customers, to handling them at the end of their lifecycle. Sustainability helps guide us to make the right decisions for our customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders, and the communities in which we operate our business. We want to manage our business sustainably to position the Company for long-term growth. Our GreenMT program is designed to help save energy and resources. We do this in four key areas: (1) developing products using our Design for Environment criteria that allow us and our customers to reduce energy usage, material, and product waste, (2) energy efficiency projects to reduce energy usage at our sites, (3) managing our sales and service fleets to reduce our fuel consumption, and (4) reducing the environmental impact of our resource consumption, especially in processes related to cooling and packaging. Our goal is to reduce our carbon footprint by the end of 2020 by 20% (relative CO2 emissions per net sales compared with 2010) and at the same time realize financial benefits.

Blue Ocean Program

“Blue Ocean” refers to our program to establish a global operating model with standardized, automated, and integrated processes and high levels of global data transparency. It encompasses an enterprise architecture, with a global, single-instance ERP system. Within our IT systems, we are moving toward integrated, homogeneous applications and common data structures. We will also largely standardize our key business processes. The implementation of the systems and processes has been proceeding on a staggered basis over a multi-year period with the initial go-live rollout having occurred in 2010. We have implemented the Blue Ocean program in our Swiss, Chinese, U.K., Benelux, and certain U.S. and German operations. We estimate that we have approximately 75% of the program completed as measured in users. We will continue to implement the program in additional locations over the coming years.

Intellectual Property

We hold over 5,000 patents and trademarks (including pending applications), primarily in the United States, Switzerland, the European Union, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Japan, China, South Korea, Brazil, and India. Our products generally incorporate a wide variety of technological innovations, some of which are protected by patents of various durations. Products are generally not protected as a whole by individual patents, and as a result, no one patent or group of related patents is material to our business. We have numerous trademarks, including the Mettler-Toledo name and logo, which are material to our business. We regularly protect against infringement of our intellectual property.

Regulation

Our products are subject to various regulatory standards and approvals by weights and measures regulatory authorities. All of our electrical components are subject to electrical safety standards. We believe that we are in compliance in all material respects with applicable regulations.

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Approvals are required to ensure our instruments do not impermissibly influence other instruments and are themselves not affected by other instruments. In addition, some of our products are used in “legal for trade” applications, in which prices based on weight are calculated and for which specific weights and measures approvals are required. Although there are a large number of regulatory agencies across our markets, there is an increasing trend toward harmonization of standards, and weights and measures regulation is harmonized across the European Union.

Our products may also be subject to special requirements depending on the end-user and market. For example, laboratory customers are typically subject to Good Laboratory Practices (GLP), industrial customers to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), pharmaceutical customers to U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations, and customers in food processing industries may be subject to Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) regulations. Products used in hazardous environments may also be subject to special requirements.

Environmental Matters

We are subject to environmental laws and regulations in the jurisdictions in which we operate. We own or lease a number of properties and manufacturing facilities around the world. Like many of our competitors, we have incurred, and will continue to incur, capital and operating expenditures and other costs in complying with such laws and regulations.

We are currently involved in, or have potential liability with respect to, the remediation of past contamination in certain of our facilities. A former subsidiary of Mettler-Toledo, LLC known as Hi-Speed Checkweigher Co., Inc. was one of two private parties ordered by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, in an administrative consent order signed on June 13, 1988, to investigate and remediate certain ground water contamination at a property in Landing, New Jersey. After the other party under this order failed to fulfill its obligations, Hi-Speed became solely responsible for compliance with the order. Residual ground water contamination at this site is now within a Classification Exception Area which the Department of Environmental Protection has approved and within which the Company oversees monitoring of the decay of contaminants of concern. A concurrent Well Restriction Area also exists for the site. The Department of Environmental Protection does not view these vehicles as remedial measures, but rather as “institutional controls” that must be adequately maintained and periodically evaluated. We estimate that the costs of compliance associated with the site over the next several years will approximate a total of \$0.4 million.

In addition, certain of our present and former facilities have or had been in operation for many decades and, over such time, some of these facilities may have used substances or generated and disposed of wastes that are or may be considered hazardous. It is possible that these sites, as well as disposal sites owned by third parties to which we have sent wastes, may in the future be identified and become the subject of remediation. Although we believe that we are in substantial compliance with applicable environmental requirements and, to date, we have not incurred material expenditures in connection with environmental matters, it is possible that we could become subject to additional environmental liabilities in the future that could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition, results of operations, or cash flows.

Competition

Our markets are highly competitive. Many of the markets in which we compete are fragmented both geographically and by application, particularly the industrial and food retailing markets. As a result, we face numerous regional or specialized competitors, many of which are well established in their markets. For example, some of our competitors are divisions of larger companies with potentially greater financial and other resources than our own. In addition, some of our competitors are domiciled in emerging markets and may have a lower cost structure than ours. We are confronted with new competitors in emerging

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markets which, although relatively small in size today, could become larger companies in their home markets. Given the sometimes significant growth rates of these emerging markets, and in light of their cost advantage over developed markets, emerging market competitors could become more significant global competitors. Taken together, the competitive forces present in our markets can impair our operating margins in certain product lines and geographic markets.

We expect our competitors to continue to improve the design and performance of their products and to introduce new products with competitive prices. Although we believe that we have technological and other competitive advantages over many of our competitors, we may not be able to realize and maintain these advantages. These advantages include our worldwide market leadership positions; our global brand and reputation; our track record of technological innovation; our comprehensive, high-quality solution offering; our global sales and service offering; our large installed base of weighing instruments; and the diversification of our revenue base by geographic region, product range, and customer. To remain competitive, we must continue to invest in research and development, sales and marketing, and customer service and support. We cannot be sure that we will have sufficient resources to continue to make these investments or that we will be successful in identifying, developing, and maintaining any competitive advantages.

We believe the principal competitive factors in developed markets for purchasing decisions are the product itself, application support, service support, and price. In emerging markets, where there is greater demand for less sophisticated products, price is a more important factor than in developed markets. Competition in the U.S. laboratory market is also influenced by the presence of large distributors that sell not only our products but those of our competitors as well.

Company Website and Information

You can find our website on the Internet at www.mt.com. The website contains information about us and our operations. The information contained on our website is not included in, or incorporated by reference into, this annual report on Form 10-K. You can view and download free of charge copies of each of our filings with the SEC on Form 10-K, Form 10-Q, Form 8-K, and Schedule 14A and all amendments to those reports by accessing www.mt.com, clicking on About Us, Investor Relations, and then clicking on SEC Filings. You may also read and copy these filings at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. You may obtain information on the operation of the Public Reference Room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. The SEC maintains a website at <http://www.sec.gov> that contains reports, proxy and information statements, and other information regarding issuers that file electronically with the SEC.

Our website also contains copies of the following documents that you can download free of charge:

- ☉ Corporate Governance Guidelines
- ♣ Audit Committee Charter
- ☉ Compensation Committee Charter
- ♠ Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee Charter
- ☉ Code of Conduct
- ♠ Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
- ♠ Business Partner Code of Conduct
- ♠ Ethical, Social and Quality Standards
- ♠ Sustainability Report
- ♠ Environmental Policy
- ♠ Political Participation Policy
- ☉ Conflict Mineral Report
- ♠ Statement on Slavery, Human Trafficking, and Transparency in the Supply Chain

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You can also obtain in print, free of charge, any of the above documents and any of our reports on Form 10-K, Form 10-Q, Form 8-K, and Schedule 14A and all amendments to those reports by sending a written request to our Investor Relations Department:

Investor Relations

Mettler-Toledo International Inc.

1900 Polaris Parkway

Columbus, OH 43240 U.S.A.

Phone: +1 614 438 4748

E-mail: mary.finnegan@mt.com

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Item 1A. Risk Factors

Factors Affecting Our Future Operating Results

We are subject to certain risks associated with our international operations and have a significant concentration of business in China.

We conduct business in many countries, including emerging markets in Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, and these operations represent a significant portion of our sales and earnings. For example, our Chinese operations accounted for 17% of sales to external customers, approximately 30% of our global production, and 35% of total segment profit during 2017. In addition to the currency risks discussed below, international operations pose other substantial risks and problems for us, including the following:

• local tariffs and trade barriers;

• countries may revise or alter their respective legal and regulatory requirements;

• difficulties in staffing and managing local operations and/or mandatory salary increases;

• credit risks arising from financial difficulties facing local customers and distributors;

• difficulties in protecting intellectual property;

• nationalization of private enterprises which may result in the confiscation of assets, as we hold significant assets

around the world in the form of property, plant, and equipment, inventory, and accounts receivable, as well as \$101 million of cash at December 31, 2017 in our Chinese subsidiaries;

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