

KRONOS WORLDWIDE INC
Form 10-K
March 12, 2015

UNITED STATES

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

x Annual Report Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934:
For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2014

Commission file number 1-31763

KRONOS WORLDWIDE, INC.

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

DELAWARE
(State or other jurisdiction
of incorporation or organization)

76-0294959
(IRS Employer
Identification No.)

5430 LBJ Freeway, Suite 1700

Dallas, Texas 75240-2697

(Address of principal executive offices)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: (972) 233-1700

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

Title of each class	Name of each exchange on which registered
Common stock (\$.01 par value)	New York Stock Exchange

No securities are registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act.

Indicate by check mark:

If the Registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes No

If the Registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes No

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 and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

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 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the Registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes No

If disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K 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

Whether the Registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer or a smaller reporting company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Act).

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer Non-accelerated filer Smaller reporting company

Whether the Registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Act). Yes No

The aggregate market value of the 21.0 million shares of voting stock held by nonaffiliates of Kronos Worldwide, Inc. as of June 30, 2014 (the last business day of the Registrant's most recently-completed second fiscal quarter) approximated \$328.3 million.

As of February 27, 2015, 115,872,598 shares of the Registrant's common stock were outstanding.

Documents incorporated by reference

The information required by Part III is incorporated by reference from the Registrant's definitive proxy statement to be filed with the Commission pursuant to Regulation 14A not later than 120 days after the end of the fiscal year covered by this report.

Forward-Looking Information

This Annual Report on Form 10-K contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, as amended. Statements in this Annual Report that are not historical facts are forward-looking in nature and represent management's beliefs and assumptions based on currently available information. In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements by the use of words such as "believes," "intends," "may," "should," "could," "anticipates," "expects" or comparable terminology, or by discussions of strategies or trends. Although we believe that the expectations reflected in such forward-looking statements are reasonable, we do not know if these expectations will be correct. Such statements by their nature involve substantial risks and uncertainties that could significantly impact expected results. Actual future results could differ materially from those predicted. The factors that could cause actual future results to differ materially from those described herein are the risks and uncertainties discussed in this Annual Report and those described from time to time in our other filings with the SEC include, but are not limited to, the following:

Future supply and demand for our products

The extent of the dependence of certain of our businesses on certain market sectors

The cyclical nature of our business

Customer and producer inventory levels

Unexpected or earlier-than-expected industry capacity expansion

Changes in raw material and other operating costs (such as energy and ore costs)

Changes in the availability of raw materials (such as ore)

General global economic and political conditions (such as changes in the level of gross domestic product in various regions of the world and the impact of such changes on demand for TiO₂)

Competitive products and substitute products

Customer and competitor strategies

Potential consolidation of our competitors

Potential consolidation of our customers

The impact of pricing and production decisions

Competitive technology positions

The introduction of trade barriers

Possible disruption of our business, or increases in our cost of doing business, resulting from terrorist activities or global conflicts

Fluctuations in currency exchange rates (such as changes in the exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and each of the euro, the Norwegian krone and the Canadian dollar), or possible disruptions to our business resulting from potential instability resulting from uncertainties associated with the euro

Operating interruptions (including, but not limited to, labor disputes, leaks, natural disasters, fires, explosions, unscheduled or unplanned downtime, transportation interruptions and cyber attacks)

Our ability to renew or refinance credit facilities

Our ability to maintain sufficient liquidity

The ultimate outcome of income tax audits, tax settlement initiatives or other tax matters

Our ability to utilize income tax attributes, the benefits of which have been recognized under the more-likely-than-not recognition criteria

Environmental matters (such as those requiring compliance with emission and discharge standards for existing and new facilities)

Government laws and regulations and possible changes therein

The ultimate resolution of pending litigation

Possible future litigation.

Should one or more of these risks materialize (or the consequences of such a development worsen), or should the underlying assumptions prove incorrect, actual results could differ materially from those forecasted or expected. We disclaim any intention or obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements whether as a result of changes in information, future events or otherwise.

PART I

ITEM 1. BUSINESS

General

Kronos Worldwide, Inc. (NYSE: KRO) (Kronos), a Delaware corporation, is a leading global producer and marketer of value-added titanium dioxide pigments, or TiO_2 , a base industrial product used in a wide range of applications. We, along with our distributors and agents, sell and provide technical services for our products to approximately 4,000 customers in 100 countries with the majority of sales in Europe and North America. We believe we have developed considerable expertise and efficiency in the manufacture, sale, shipment and service of our products in domestic and international markets.

TiO_2 is a white inorganic pigment used in a wide range of products for its exceptional durability and its ability to impart whiteness, brightness and opacity. TiO_2 is a critical component of everyday applications, such as coatings, plastics and paper, as well as many specialty products such as inks, food and cosmetics. TiO_2 is widely considered to be superior to alternative white pigments in large part due to its hiding power (or opacity), which is the ability to cover or mask other materials effectively and efficiently. TiO_2 is designed, marketed and sold based on specific end-use applications.

TiO_2 is the largest commercially used whitening pigment because it has a high refractive rating, giving it more hiding power than any other commercially produced white pigment. In addition, TiO_2 has excellent resistance to interaction with other chemicals, good thermal stability and resistance to ultraviolet degradation. Although there are other white pigments on the market, we believe there are no effective substitutes for TiO_2 because no other white pigment has the physical properties for achieving comparable opacity and brightness or can be incorporated in as cost-effective a manner. Pigment extenders such as kaolin clays, calcium carbonate and polymeric opacifiers are used together with TiO_2 in a number of end-use markets. However, these products are not able to duplicate the opacity performance characteristics of TiO_2 and we believe these products are unlikely to have a significant impact on the use of TiO_2 .

TiO_2 is considered a “quality-of-life” product. Demand for TiO_2 has generally been driven by worldwide gross domestic product and has generally increased with rising standards of living in various regions of the world. According to industry estimates, TiO_2 consumption has grown at a compound annual growth rate of approximately 3.0% since 1990. Per capita consumption of TiO_2 in Western Europe and the United States far exceeds that in other areas of the world, and these regions are expected to continue to be the largest consumers of TiO_2 on a per capita basis. We believe that Western Europe and North America currently account for approximately 19% and 17% of global TiO_2 consumption, respectively. Markets for TiO_2 are generally increasing in South America, Eastern Europe, the Asia Pacific region and China and we believe these are significant markets where we expect continued growth as economies in these regions continue to develop and quality-of-life products, including TiO_2 , experience greater demand.

At December 31, 2014, approximately 50% of our common stock was owned by Valhi, Inc. (NYSE: VHI) and approximately 30% was owned by NL Industries, Inc. (NYSE: NL). Valhi also owns approximately 83% of NL Industries' outstanding common stock. A wholly-owned subsidiary of Contran Corporation held approximately 93% of Valhi's outstanding common stock. As discussed in Note 1 to our Consolidated Financial Statements, Lisa K. Simmons, Serena Simmons Connelly and Annette C. Simmons may be deemed to control Contran, Valhi, NL and us.

Products and end-use markets

Including our predecessors, we have produced and marketed TiO₂ in North America and Europe, our primary markets, for over 90 years. We believe that we are the largest producer of TiO₂ in Europe with approximately one-half of our sales volumes attributable to markets in Europe. The table below shows our market share for our significant markets, Europe and North America, for the last three years.

4

	2012	2013	2014
Europe	19 %	18 %	18 %
North America	19 %	18 %	17 %

We believe that we are the leading seller of TiO₂ in several countries, including Germany, with an estimated 9% share of worldwide TiO₂ sales volume in 2014. Overall, we are one of the top five producers of TiO₂ in the world.

We offer our customers a broad portfolio of products that include over 40 different TiO₂ pigment grades under the Kronos® trademark, which provide a variety of performance properties to meet customers' specific requirements. Our major customers include domestic and international paint, plastics, decorative laminate and paper manufacturers. We ship TiO₂ to our customers in either a powder or slurry form via rail, truck and/or ocean carrier. Sales of our core TiO₂ pigments represented approximately 90% of our net sales in 2014. We and our agents and distributors primarily sell and provide technical services for our products in three major end-use markets: coatings, plastics and paper.

The following tables show our approximate TiO₂ sales volume by geographic region and end use for the year ended December 31, 2014:

Sales volumes percentages		Sales volumes percentages	
by geographic region		by end-use	
Europe	50 %	Coatings	56 %
North America	33 %	Plastics	31 %
Asia Pacific	7 %	Other	8 %
Rest of World	10 %	Paper	5 %

Some of the principal applications for our products include the following.

TiO₂ for coatings - Our TiO₂ is used to provide opacity, durability, tinting strength and brightness in industrial coatings, as well as coatings for commercial and residential interiors and exteriors, automobiles, aircraft, machines, appliances, traffic paint and other special purpose coatings. The amount of TiO₂ used in coatings varies widely depending on the opacity, color and quality desired. In general, the higher the opacity requirement of the coating, the greater the TiO₂ content.

TiO₂ for plastics - We produce TiO₂ pigments that improve the optical and physical properties in plastics, including whiteness and opacity. TiO₂ is used to provide opacity in items such as containers and packaging materials, and vinyl products such as windows, door profiles and siding. TiO₂ also generally provides hiding power, neutral undertone, brightness and surface durability for housewares, appliances, toys, computer cases and food packages. TiO₂'s high brightness along with its opacity, is used in some engineering plastics to help mask their undesirable natural color. TiO₂ is also used in masterbatch, which is a concentrate of TiO₂ and other additives and is one of the largest uses for TiO₂ in the plastics end-use market. In masterbatch, the TiO₂ is dispersed at high concentrations into a plastic resin and is then used by manufacturers of plastic containers, bottles, packaging and agricultural films.

TiO₂ for paper - Our TiO₂ is used in the production of several types of paper, including laminate (decorative) paper, filled paper and coated paper to provide whiteness, brightness, opacity and color stability. Although we sell our TiO₂ to all segments of the paper end-use market, our primary focus is on the TiO₂ grades used in paper laminates, where

several layers of paper are laminated together using melamine resin under high temperature and pressure. The top layer of paper contains TiO_2 and plastic resin and is the layer that is printed with decorative patterns. Paper laminates are used to replace materials such as wood and tile for such applications as counter tops, furniture and wallboard. TiO_2 is beneficial in these applications because it assists in preventing the material from fading or changing color after prolonged exposure to sunlight and other weathering agents.

5

TiO₂ for other applications - We produce TiO₂ to improve the opacity and hiding power of printing inks. TiO₂ allows inks to achieve very high print quality while not interfering with the technical requirements of printing machinery, including low abrasion, high printing speed and high temperatures. Our TiO₂ is also used in textile applications where TiO₂ functions as an opacifying and delustering agent. In man-made fibers such as rayon and polyester, TiO₂ corrects an otherwise undesirable glossy and translucent appearance. Without the presence of TiO₂, these materials would be unsuitable for use in many textile applications.

We produce high purity sulfate process anatase TiO₂ used to provide opacity, whiteness and brightness in a variety of cosmetic and personal care products, such as skin cream, lipstick, eye shadow and toothpaste. Our TiO₂ is also found in food products, such as candy and confectionaries, and in pet foods where it is used to obtain uniformity of color and appearance. In pharmaceuticals, our TiO₂ is used commonly as a colorant in pill and capsule coatings as well as in liquid medicines to provide uniformity of color and appearance. Kronos® purified anatase grades meet the applicable requirements of the CTFA (Cosmetics, Toiletries and Fragrances Association), USP and BP (United States Pharmacopoeia and British Pharmacopoeia) and the FDA (United States Food and Drug Administration).

Our TiO₂ business is enhanced by the following three complementary businesses, which comprised approximately 10% of our net sales in 2014:

We own and operate two ilmenite mines in Norway pursuant to a governmental concession with an unlimited term. Ilmenite is a raw material used directly as a feedstock by some sulfate-process TiO₂ plants. We believe that we have a significant competitive advantage because our mines supply our feedstock requirements for all of our European sulfate-process plants. We also sell ilmenite ore to third-parties, some of whom are our competitors. The mines have estimated ilmenite reserves that are expected to last at least 50 years.

We manufacture and sell iron-based chemicals, which are co-products and processed co-products of the sulfate and chloride process TiO₂ pigment production. These co-product chemicals are marketed through our Ecochem division and are primarily used as treatment and conditioning agents for industrial effluents and municipal wastewater as well as in the manufacture of iron pigments, cement and agricultural products.

We manufacture and sell titanium oxychloride and titanyl sulfate, which are side-stream specialty products from the production of TiO₂. Titanium oxychloride is used in specialty applications in the formulation of pearlescent pigments, production of electroceramic capacitors for cell phones and other electronic devices. Titanyl sulfate productions are used in pearlescent pigments, natural gas pipe and other specialty applications.

Manufacturing, operations and properties

We produce TiO₂ in two crystalline forms: rutile and anatase. Rutile TiO₂ is manufactured using both a chloride production process and a sulfate production process, whereas anatase TiO₂ is only produced using a sulfate production process. Manufacturers of many end-use applications can use either form, especially during periods of tight supply for TiO₂. The chloride process is the preferred form for use in coatings and plastics, the two largest end-use markets. Due to environmental factors and customer considerations, the proportion of TiO₂ industry sales represented by chloride process pigments has increased relative to sulfate process pigments, and in 2014, chloride process production facilities represented approximately 45% of industry capacity. The sulfate process is preferred for use in selected paper products, ceramics, rubber tires, man-made fibers, food products and cosmetics. Once an intermediate TiO₂ pigment has been produced by either the chloride or sulfate process, it is “finished” into products with specific performance characteristics for particular end-use applications through proprietary processes involving various chemical surface treatments and intensive micronizing (milling).

Chloride process - The chloride process is a continuous process in which chlorine is used to extract rutile TiO₂. The chloride process produces less waste than the sulfate process because much of the chlorine is recycled and feedstock bearing higher titanium content is used. The chloride process also has lower energy requirements and is less labor-intensive than the sulfate process, although the chloride process requires a higher-skilled labor force. The

chloride process produces an intermediate base pigment with a wide range of properties.

6

Sulfate process - The Sulfate process is a batch process in which sulfuric acid is used to extract the TiO₂ from ilmenite or titanium slag. After separation from the impurities in the ore (mainly iron), the TiO₂ is precipitated and calcined to form an intermediate base pigment ready for sale or can be upgraded through finishing treatments.

We produced 511,000 metric tons of TiO₂ in 2014, up from the 474,000 metric tons we produced in 2013. Our production amounts include our share of the output produced by our TiO₂ manufacturing joint venture discussed below in "TiQ Manufacturing Joint Venture." Our average production capacity utilization rates were approximately 85%, 86% and 92% of capacity in 2012, 2013 and 2014, respectively. Our production utilization rates in 2013 were impacted by the previously-reported lockout at our Canadian production facility that began in June 2013. We operated our Canadian plant at approximately 15% of the plant's capacity with non-union management employees during the lockout. Our production rates in 2014 were also impacted by such lockout, as restart of production at the facility did not begin until February 2014. Our production rates in 2014 were also impacted by the implementation of certain productivity-enhancing improvement projects at other facilities, as well as necessary improvements to ensure continued compliance with our permit regulations, which resulted in longer-than-normal maintenance shutdowns in some instances.

We operate four TiO₂ plants in Europe (one in each of Leverkusen, Germany; Nordenham, Germany; Langerbrugge, Belgium; and Fredrikstad, Norway). In North America, we have a TiO₂ plant in Varennes, Quebec, Canada and, through the manufacturing joint venture described below in "TiQ Manufacturing Joint Venture," a 50% interest in a TiO₂ plant in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

Our production capacity in 2014 was 555,000 metric tons, approximately three-fourths of which was from the chloride production process.

The following table presents the division of our expected 2015 manufacturing capacity by plant location and type of manufacturing process:

Facility	Description	% of capacity by TiO ₂ manufacturing process	
		Chloride	Sulfate
Leverkusen, Germany (1)	TiO ₂ production, chloride and sulfate process, co-products	39 %	25 %
Nordenham, Germany	TiO ₂ production, sulfate process, co-products	-	40
Langerbrugge, Belgium	TiO ₂ production, chloride process, co-products, titanium chemicals products	21	-
Fredrikstad, Norway (2)	TiO ₂ production, sulfate process, co-products	-	22
Varennes, Canada	TiO ₂ production, chloride and sulfate process, slurry facility, titanium chemicals products	21	13
Lake Charles, LA, US (3)	TiO ₂ production, chloride process	19	-
Total		100 %	100 %

(1) The Leverkusen facility is located within an extensive manufacturing complex owned by Bayer AG. We own the Leverkusen facility, which represents about one-third of our current TiO₂ production capacity, but we lease the land under the facility from Bayer under a long-term agreement which expires in 2050. Lease payments are periodically negotiated with Bayer for periods of at least two years at a time. A majority-owned subsidiary of Bayer provides some raw materials including chlorine, auxiliary and operating materials, utilities and services necessary to operate the Leverkusen facility under separate supplies and services agreements.

(2) The Fredrikstad plant is located on public land and is leased until 2063.

(3) We operate the Lake Charles facility in a joint venture with Tioxide Americas LLC (Tioxide), a subsidiary of Huntsman Corporation and the amount indicated in the table above represents the share of TiO_2 produced by the joint venture to which we are entitled. See Note 5 to our Consolidated Financial Statements and “TiQ Manufacturing Joint Venture.”

7

We own the land underlying all of our principle production facilities unless otherwise indicated in the table above.

Our production capacity has increased by approximately 16% over the past ten years due to debottlenecking programs, with only moderate capital expenditures. We believe that our annual attainable production capacity for 2015 is approximately 555,000 metric tons. While we expect our production capacity rate to be higher in 2015 as compared to 2014, we expect that we will operate at less-than-full production capacity in 2015, due principally to completing the implementation of certain productivity-enhancing capital improvement projects at certain facilities which will result in longer-than-normal maintenance shutdowns in some instances.

We also operate two ilmenite mines in Norway pursuant to a governmental concession with an unlimited term. In addition, we operate a rutile slurry manufacturing plant in Lake Charles, Louisiana, which converts dry pigment manufactured for us at the Lake Charles TiO₂ facility into a slurry form that is then shipped to customers.

We have various corporate and administrative offices located in the U.S., Germany, Norway, Canada and Belgium and various sales offices located in the U.S., Canada, Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

TiO₂ Manufacturing Joint Venture

Kronos Louisiana, Inc., one of our subsidiaries, and Tioxide each own a 50% interest in a manufacturing joint venture, Louisiana Pigment Company, L.P., or LPC. LPC owns and operates a chloride-process TiO₂ plant located in Lake Charles, Louisiana. We and Huntsman share production from the plant equally pursuant to separate offtake agreements.

A supervisory committee directs the business and affairs of the joint venture, including production and output decisions. This committee is composed of four members, two of whom we appoint and two of whom Huntsman appoints. Two general managers manage the operations of the joint venture acting under the direction of the supervisory committee. We appoint one general manager and Huntsman appoints the other.

The joint venture is not consolidated in our financial statements, because we do not control it. We account for our interest in the joint venture by the equity method. The joint venture operates on a break-even basis and therefore we do not have any equity in earnings of the joint venture. We are required to purchase one half of the TiO₂ produced by the joint venture. All costs and capital expenditures are shared equally with Huntsman with the exception of feedstock (purchased natural rutile ore or slag) and packaging costs for the pigment grades produced. Our share of net costs is reported as cost of sales as the TiO₂ is sold. See Notes 5 and 14 to our Consolidated Financial Statements.

Raw materials

The primary raw materials used in chloride process TiO₂ are titanium-containing feedstock (purchased natural rutile ore or slag), chlorine and coke. Chlorine is available from a number of suppliers, while petroleum coke is available from a limited number of suppliers. Titanium-containing feedstock suitable for use in the chloride process is available from a limited but increasing number of suppliers principally in Australia, South Africa, Canada, India and the United States. We purchase chloride process grade slag from Rio Tinto Iron and Titanium under a long-term supply contract that expires at the end of 2016 and from Tronox Mineral Sands (PTY) LTD under a supply contract that expires in December 2015. We purchase upgraded slag from Q.I.T. Fer et Titane Inc. (a subsidiary of Rio Tinto Iron and Titanium) under a long-term supply contract that expires at the end of 2015. We purchase natural rutile ore under contracts primarily from Iluka Resources, Limited (under a new contract entered into in January 2015) and Sierra Rutile Limited, both of which expire in 2015. In the past we have been, and we expect that we will continue to be, successful in obtaining short-term and long-term extensions to these and other existing supply contracts prior to their expiration. We expect the raw materials purchased under these contracts, and contracts that we may enter into, will

meet our chloride process feedstock requirements over the next several years.

8

The primary raw materials used in sulfate process TiO_2 are titanium-containing feedstock, primarily ilmenite or purchased sulfate grade slag and sulfuric acid. Sulfuric acid is available from a number of suppliers.

Titanium-containing feedstock suitable for use in the sulfate process is available from a limited number of suppliers principally in Norway, Canada, Australia, India and South Africa. As one of the few vertically-integrated producers of sulfate process TiO_2 , we operate two rock ilmenite mines in Norway, which provided all of the feedstock for our European sulfate process TiO_2 plants in 2014. We expect ilmenite production from our mines to meet our European sulfate process feedstock requirements for the foreseeable future. For our Canadian sulfate process plant, we purchase sulfate grade slag primarily from Q.I.T. Fer et Titane Inc. (a subsidiary of Rio Tinto Iron and Titanium), under a supply contract that expires at the end of 2015. We expect the raw materials purchased under these contracts, and contracts that we may enter into, to meet our sulfate process feedstock requirements over the next several years.

Many of our raw material c