

Summaries of competitors

Akzo Nobel

1. Akzo Nobel is a publicly-owned company traded on the European Exchange in Amsterdam and the NasDaq in New York with a market capitalization of approximately €8 billion. Its headquarters are in the Netherlands and it employs almost 64,000 people. It is active in three business areas: healthcare, coatings and chemicals. Sales in the chemicals business area in 2003 were €4.4 billion. In September 2003 the company announced a programme for divestment of some of its chemical activities (of which sales were approximately €1 billion), which is almost complete.

BASF

2. BASF is a publicly-owned company traded on the New York and Frankfurt Stock Exchanges with a market capitalization of approximately €26 billion. Its headquarters are in Ludwigshafen, Germany, where the company operates the world's largest integrated chemical complex, and has 87,000 employees. Its five business segments are chemicals (basic, intermediate and speciality), plastics, oil and gas, performance products, and agricultural products and nutrition. It posted €33.4 billion sales in 2003, of which over 15 per cent were in its chemical segment (€5.8 billion).

Ertisa

3. Ertisa is a privately-owned company owned by CEPSA, a Spanish quoted company. CEPSA's market capitalization is approximately €8 billion. Ertisa's headquarters are in Madrid and its production centre is located in the Nuevo Puerto Industrial Area, in the south-west corner of Spain. It specializes in the manufacture of phenol, acetone, methylamines and derivatives.

Ineos

4. Ineos is a private-equity-owned group founded in 1998 to acquire the former BP/Inspec Ethylene Oxide complex in Antwerp, Belgium. Ineos's headquarters are in Lyndhurst, UK, and it has approximately 10,000 employees worldwide. It is a manufacturer of specialty and intermediate chemicals and has grown rapidly by both acquisition and internal expansions. In 2002, its revenues were approximately €5 billion.