

PART 4 – AROMA CHEMICALS DERIVED FROM ESSENTIAL OILS

10 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The primary impact of essential oil production is agricultural. Accordingly, the main environmental impact is during the agricultural stage. Although this stage of production falls outside the scope of this study the following points are noted:

- Soil erosion caused by poor agricultural practices;
- The use of non-organic fertilizers and pesticides;
- The impact of agriculture on natural fauna and flora; and
- Water usage.

None of the above are unique to essential oil crops and are dealt with already by the Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs.

One environmental matter that does arise in respect of essential oils, where these are derived from cultivating indigenous plants, is the problem of introducing foreign plant materials into an area. This can negatively impact the biodiversity and integrity of ecosystems. This matter is currently adequately controlled by a system of permits, however it may require additional consideration if this segment of the industry were to grow significantly.

In the later stage beneficiation the handling of chemical compounds may have some environmental impacts but these are negligible and there are no high volume waste streams.