1. Has waste management been classed as an essential service in your country?
   Yes, in Austria Waste Management Services are classed as essential services of general interest and are continued in times of the Virus. The main focus here is to maintain waste collection services nationwide.

2. How many workers are affected by the current situation / are you operating with a reduced workforce?
   All workers are affected in one way or another.
   As stated already, the priority right now is to maintain waste collection services.
   In Vienna, the municipality is responsible for waste collection, waste treatment and waste disposal along with other public services such as street sweeping, the operation of recycling centres and winter service.
   Taking a closer look at the different services provided, the current situation is as follows:
   - Waste Collection Services:
     The employees in charge of collecting the waste have been stocked up relying on employees that are usually in charge of street sweeping. Therefore, our pool of employees in collection services has enlarged. This allows us to leave a fair number of workers at home and reachable, in case they need to replace someone in the pool that is currently in the streets.
     The “replacement pool”, meaning the employees who are currently at home, includes both employees that usually work in street sweeping services and employees that are experienced in waste collection services, in order to ensure that – also in the future – enough experienced workers are available.
     Older employees and employees with immunodeficiencies stay at home.
   - Street Sweeping Services:
     The employees who are in charge for street sweeping have been reduced by over 50% and can now help out in more urgent fields of work like waste collection services.
   - Administrative Employees:
     Our office personnel has been converted to home office, as much as possible. For the employees that still work from the office, we made sure that only one person per office room is coming in, in order to limit contacts to a minimum.

a. What special measures have you taken to enable operations to continue with a reduced workforce?
   In all of Austria the maintenance of waste collection services has been prioritized. In Vienna, the smooth operation is ensured as explained in Question 2.
Fortunately, we have enough manpower to be able to draw on employees from less pressing fields in order to ensure the most essential services.

b. What extra health and safety precautions have you taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your waste workforce?

In order to limit contacts between the workers that work in collection services, the following precautions have been taken in Vienna:

- Collection services start in three time-shifts now. This measure ensures limited contacts between employees in the social rooms, where they start their shifts from.
- Teams of workers (up to five employees per waste collection car) are mixed less frequently and only if necessary (e.g. because someone from the “replacement pool” replaces another employee).
- Employees are advised to wash their hands, whenever they return to the common facilities. In addition, they are provided disinfectant in the cars, which they have been asked to use regularly. The disinfectant provided has been produced in the laboratory of the municipality in charge of waste management in Vienna (MA 48).
- Moreover, all collection cars are provided with medical face masks. As soon as one of the employees starts to cough or shows any other symptoms, this employee has to start wearing a mask.

c. Have you / will you, scale back your waste collection frequency?

- In Austria, all measures focus on avoiding the need of scaling back the frequency of waste collection services.
- In Vienna, as explained in detail, a pool of employees from other services provided by the same municipality, ensures the continuity of waste collection services.

3. How is your system coping with the increase in face masks and other PPE in household waste?

At this moment, no increase in face masks and other PPE in household waste has been noticed. However, the usual methods of treatment of residual waste in Austria would not react sensitive to such an increase.

a. Do face masks continue to go into residual waste, or have you introduced any special measures for the separate collection of face masks?

In Austria, all sanitary products, such as face masks, used tissues, etc... are collected with the residual waste. This is safe, as no residual waste is landfilled directly (without preceding treatment) nationwide.

In Vienna, all residual waste is treated in one of our four waste-to-energy plants. During this process, the material is disarmed.

b. Have you made any special communications to the general public, for example, do you ask them to make fewer trips to the recycling stations, or to avoid trips to the tips/drop-off centres to get rid of bulky waste items?
Recycling centres all over Austria have been closed, with a small number of exceptions that is only open to small businesses that provide services that are not to be delayed. However, people can still bring their recyclables such as glass, plastic bottles and metals to the recycling points throughout the city. Residual waste and waste paper is collected from the household directly.

c. Are people being given special instructions on how to deal with possibly contaminated waste?

Possibly contaminated waste is collected with the residual waste and then burned.

Citizens have been instructed to collect the material in plastic bags which should be sealed before being disposed of in the general container for residual waste.

4. Do recycling centres remain open to the general public?

No. Most recycling centres, nationwide, are closed at the moment. The remaining recycling centres are only in service of small businesses that provide services that are not to be delayed.

Citizens have been advised to stay at home, meaning that they are not supposed to leave the house in order to go to recycling centres either. People who need to get rid of specials waste streams from households, such as bulky waste or hazardous waste are now asked to store these items temporarily at home, until we are able to open our recycling centres for everyone again.

5. Have the international travel restrictions caused any interruptions with sending waste for processing overseas, importing/exporting waste? How are you managing the waste you cannot ship overseas?

The Austrian Waste is treated locally and not shipped overseas.

6. Are you incinerating (if capacity exists) more MSW than previously?

When it comes to this question, experiences seem to be different across Austria: While the region of Upper Austria has reported an increase in MSW that needs to be incinerated, quantities in Vienna seem to have remained the same. Reliable Numbers, however, are not yet available at this moment...

In any case a rapid increase of residual waste would not cause any problems in Vienna, as the excess quantity of household waste could be processed and stored safely for up to one year.