1. Has waste management been classed as an essential service in your country?
   YES: waste collection and treatment have been considered to be an essential service.

2. How many workers are affected by the current situation / are you operating with a reduced workforce?
   We have been monitoring the dropout of workers, related to possible COVID-infections. At the end of March we saw a rise in sick workers from 6 to 9% (COVID-related). However, the lockdown measures in Belgium seem to have had a positive impact. Since then, the number of COVID-related sick workers has either dropped slightly (for drivers) or remained stable (for waste collectors).
   a. What special measures have you taken to enable operations to continue with a reduced workforce?
      In the beginning: all civic amenity sites were closed for two reasons: it turned out to be impossible to organize ‘social distancing’ there in the beginning (lack of awareness amongst the public) and we could use that staff to make sure that the doorstep collection of household waste could be guaranteed. For the doorstep collection, monitoring of available staff was set up. Should problems arise, priority would be given to residual and biowaste.
   b. What extra health and safety precautions have you taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your waste workforce?
      Rules of social distancing apply. This means e.g. that we do not accept 3 people to be in the cabin of a waste collection truck simultaneously. The start up times of the different collection teams has been distributed in time so that concentration of workers in the workplace is avoided. All trucks carry disinfecting alcoholgel. Trucks are cleaned on a regular basis. Clear instructions are given (use of safety gloves, try not to touch your face, necessity to wash hands on a regular basis,…). We do NOT provide facemasks. Those are reserved for the healthcare workers.
   c. Have you / will you, scale back your waste collection frequency?
      Doorstep collection of all waste streams has been guaranteed at all time. Only collection of textile has been stopped due to the fact that the international market for textiles has come to a complete halt. Since 07.04.2020, most civic amenity sites have been reopened, but strict security measures apply (we communicate to the public NOT to come unless absolutely necessary, number of visitors is limited, social distancing is enforced,…).

3. How is your system coping with the increase in face masks and other PPE in household waste?
   a. Do face masks continue to go into residual waste, or have you introduced any special measures for the separate collection of face masks?
      These go into the residual waste. We asked the scientific team that supports the Belgian crisis center for an advice on the risks for contamination.
   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?
      Yes, see above.
c. Are people being given special instructions on how to deal with possibly contaminated waste?
   People have been asked to always make sure that the waste collection recipient (bag or container) is fully closed.

4. Do recycling centres remain open to the general public?
   See above, they have been closed temporarily, but have reopened now in Flanders. For now, they remain closed in Wallonia.

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?
   Only textiles have become a major problem for now. We intend to ask derogations to the prohibition on incineration of such waste, until the market stabilizes. Collection of textile waste is stopped for now.

6. Are you incinerating (if capacity exists) more MSW than previously?
   On the contrary: we incinerate less waste than normally. However: the quantity of household waste that we collect has risen. But this is more than compensated by a drop in commercial and industrial waste, leading to less incineration of waste in total.