Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Agriculture, Forestry, Regions
and Water Management

Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017

on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (recast)

Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167 of 27 April 2021

establishing the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of biological, environmental, technical and socioeconomic data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors from 2022

Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168 of 27 April 2021

establishing the list of mandatory research surveys at sea and thresholds as part of the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors from 2022

Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/39 of 12 January 2022

laying down rules on the format and timetables for the submission of national work plans and annual reports for data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and repealing Implementing Decisions (EU) 2016/1701 and (EU) 2018/1283

Austria Annual Report on data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors

2024

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Data collection framework at national level

General comment: Use this text box to describe how data collection is organised in your Member State (institutions involved, contact information) and in which regional coordination groups (RCG) your Member State participates.
The data collection framework is under the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management. The national correspondent is: Margareta Stubenrauch, Stubenring 12, 1010 Vienna Data about aquaculture production according to regulation (EC) 762/2008 on the submission by Member States of statistics on aquaculture are collected by "Statistik Austria". According to https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tag00075/default/table?lang=en the EU's aquaculture production in 2020 was 1.070.165, 0277 tonnes, while Austria's production in the same year amounted to 4.526, 915 tonnes, which represents 0,42 % of the EU's production. According to Chapter II Para 7 of the Commission's Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168, there is no obligation for Member States to collect socio-economic data on a regular basis if their aquaculture production is below 1 % of the EU's production. Under previous MAPs we did two pilot studies to develop methodologies for social-economic data collection in order to be prepared in case it becomes an obligation. However, as this does not seem to be the case in the immediate future, we will not pursue these activities right now and focus on data collection activities fulfilling objectives under other EMFAF priorities. This is also due to the very limited EMFAF resources. Austria's share is 0,13 (!) % of the overall EMFAF-budget.

Text Box 1b: Other data collection activities

Activity A: Survey and Assessment of Fish and Crayfish Stocks in Selected Small Natural Austrian Lakes

General comment: Use this text box to provide information on other data collection activities that relate to your EMFAF operational programme and need to be included in the work plan and the annual report. Describe activities that are funded by the DCF but fulfil objectives under other EMFAF priorities, like marine knowledge, or activities funded by the DCF, but without a direct link to the EU MAP specific requirements or WP template tables, like freshwater fisheries. You can also include one-off specific studies for a particular end-user need that do not enter the regular data collection.
1. Aim of the data collection activity During the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, all large lakes (>50 hectares) in Austria have regularly undergone standardised surveying and evaluation according to the stipulations of this directive. In contrast, the knowledge about the limnology and biology of small lakes (<50 hectares), which frequently come under heavy use for angling and tourism, is sketchy due to the absence of studies on fishing activity and fish ecology of these lakes. There are three native freshwater crayfish species listed in the Habitats Directive in Annex II respectively V, which obligates Austria to protect and conserve them. Due to the lack of a standardised sampling approach, no comparative data of populations are available, which would be of highest importance concerning the conservation of endangered native freshwater crayfish. The objective of the data collection activity is to close the current knowledge gaps regarding the fish and crayfish species and to ensure their sustainable availability through proposals for management measures to be

developed during the project.
The current method used in Austria for the examination of fish ecology and evaluation of bodies of standing water >50 ha according to the EU Water Framework Directive will be adapted for its application in small lakes. In addition, the capture-mark-recapture technique will be used to verify adaptations of the methodology and further data as regards individual growth and preferences regarding habitat selection.
It is envisaged investigating the fish ecology of representative alpine lakes between 10 and 50 ha in size and evaluating them in terms of their ecological state by means of adapted assessment schemes. To verify the methodology, two lakes between 50 and 60 ha in size will also be examined using the methodology described. There is comparative data for these lakes so that the adaptations implemented are checked via the direct comparative values and any deviations applied to improve the methodology.
Fish and crayfish species in these lakes will also be examined using e-DNA and compared with the surveyed inventory of fish species to use this non-invasive method alternatively/in addition to the capture methods in future. The analyses will likewise consider whether this method is also suitable for estimating the potential risk to fish and crayfish from disease.
The aim of a nationwide standardised sampling approach is to develop a tool for stagnant waterbodies that enables the creation of comparative data by assessing the conservation status and the state of risk for all freshwater crayfish species native to Austria.

2. Duration of the data collection activity

Start: First quarter 2023; End: Final quarter 2025

3. Methodology and expected outcomes of the data collection activity

Standard methodology for surveying fish stocks

The standardised methodology and assessment scheme according to the guidelines of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management will be adapted for its specific application to small lakes.
The adapted survey method will be used to examine lakes in terms of fish ecology and to evaluate them according to the stipulations of the EU Water Framework Directive. Gillnets, electro-fishing, and echo counting will be used for this standardised fishing procedure.
The standardised net fishing method is based on stratified random sampling in different depth ranges. The level of effort required for capture will depend on the surface and depth of the lake.

Marking and recapture method

In view of the shallow water areas of particular relevance to small lakes, a very dense monitoring network will be set up in addition to the existing method, use of weirs and electro-fishing. The fish captured via weir and electro-fishing can be individually marked with PIT tags. Where these fish are captured using multi-mesh gillnets or by angling, the recapture rate allows a meaningful conclusion to be drawn regarding the total fish population. This makes it possible to control the adaptations of the sampling setup required for small lakes while also getting information on the territorial behaviour and individual increases in weight/length.
With the data collected, the guidelines used for evaluating fish ecology of lakes >50 ha can be adapted for small lakes.

Sampling and assessing the conservation status and state of risk of freshwater crayfish.

Based on results of an evaluation of sampling methods, the following monitoring methods will be applied:

1. Hand capture by day
2. Hand capture by night
3. Trapping and artificial hides
4. Diving
5. eDNA

Sampling design for e-DNA water samples

The populations of fish species in the small lakes selected will be surveyed applying traditional standardised methods. Water samples, to be used for e-DNA analysis investigating fish and crayfish species and for comparison with the capture data, will be taken in parallel.

Outcomes of the test study

1. List of fish species for the lakes selected
2. Basic parameters for fish ecology (growth, maturity, age structure, ...) of the commercial fish species in these small lakes
3. Assessment of populations and state of risk of freshwater crayfish
4. Design for e-DNA sampling
5. Gain in expertise for the use of e-DNA to survey fish and crayfish communities in lakes
6. Evaluation of fish ecology
7. Recommendations for management
8. Adapted guidelines for the examination of small lakes and evaluation of their fish ecology
9. Guidelines for sampling and assessing native crayfish populations

Activity A: Survey and Assessment of Fish and Crayfish Stocks in Selected Small Natural Austrian Lakes

Brief description of the results (including deviations from the plan and justifications as to why if this was the case).

The sampling campaign in 2024 was conducted as planned, with data collection in Erlaufsee, Gleinkersee, and Prebersee. For all three lakes, environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling method, the standardized method according to the Water Framework Directive (WFD) was applied for fish populations, while the method outlined by Auer et al. (2022) was used for crayfish. The capture-mark-recapture method was employed to assess fish assemblages in both Erlaufsee and Gleinkersee.

The stock assessment of crayfish was gathered by visual mapping (day/night), crayfish traps and artificial traps (bricks). In total 279 individuals of Astacus astacus in Prebersee and 84 individuals in Gleinkersee could be observed. Despite a lot of existing heterogenous habitats in Erlaufsee, not a single individual of Astacus astacus could have been found, however one individual of Austropotamobius torrentium was observed in the outlet of Erlaufsee.
In Prebersee the most successful observation method with 155 observations of Astacus astacus was by visual mapping at night, followed by 101 individuals caught with crayfish traps and 23 individuals with artificial traps.
With the aid of visual mapping mainly adult and subadult individuals of Astacus astacus could be observed. As expected, exclusively adults (99.1%) were caught with crayfish traps, whereas the proportion between female and males (50,9 % M, 49,1 % W) was surprisingly almost the same. The artificial traps showed a relatively high rate of success, especially the high number of trapped subadult Astacus astacus (47,8 %). Even with the artificial traps the juvenile crayfish could not be detected.
Along the shoreline of Gleinkersee, 34 individuals of Astacus astacus were observed. Of these, the majority were adults, which were mainly detected at night, while all age classes were visible during the day. The crayfish traps primarily captured adults, with only a few subadults and one juvenile. Of these, 82,5 % were male.

As part of the EMFAF project, standardized fish sampling method referred to in the methodological part of the work plan, was conducted as planned in Gleinkersee, Prebersee, and Erlaufsee using gillnetting, shoreline electrofishing, and hydroacoustic surveys.
Prebersee (20–21 August 2024):
A total of 220 fish, weighing 26.3 kg, were caught using gill nets. Eight species were recorded, with perch comprising 54.9%% (14.4 kg; n=184) and “Elsässer Saibling” 34.2% (9 kg; n=22) of the total biomass. Additional species included brown trout (4.5%;1.2 kg; n=3), Arctic char (3.5%; 0.9 kg; n=5), tench (2.2%; 0.6 kg; n=3). Chub, minnow, and roach each accounted for less than 1%.
To ensure comparability of the data between the eight lakes studied as part of the EMFAF project, a catch per unit effort (CPUE) is calculated. For Prebersee 29.7 fish/100m²/12h (open water n = 2.1; bottom n = 27.6) and a biomass of 3 kg/100m²/12h (open water 0.4 kg; bottom 2.6 kg) were determined.
Electrofishing along the shoreline yielded 99 individuals, predominantly minnow (n = 51; 51.5%) and perch (n =47; 47.5%). One Arctic char was also captured.

Erlaufsee (26–29 August 2024):
Gillnetting resulted in a catch of 963 fish with a total weight of 57.8 kg. Eight species were recorded; roach was most abundant, comprising 50% (n= 477; 20.2 kg) of the total catch, followed by perch 44.1% (n=425; 12.9 kg) and whitefish (Coregonus sp.) 4.5% (n=43; 19.2 kg). Chub, pike, rudd, tench, and char contributed less than 1%.
The CPUE was 39.5 fish/100 m²/12 h, with a corresponding biomass of 2 kg/100 m²/12 h.
Electrofishing yielded 200 individuals, mainly roach (n = 99; 49.5%), perch (n = 73; 36.5%) and chub (n = 22; 11%). In addition, pike (n = 4), bullhead (n = 1) and rudd (n = 1) were also detected.

Gleinkersee (3–5 September 2024):
During the gillnet survey, 719 fish (total weight: 18 kg) were captured, representing six species. Perch dominated the catch 86.4% (n=621; 12 kg), followed by rudd 10.9% (n=78; 3.2 kg) and roach 2.4% (n=17; 1.3 kg). Pike, whitefish, and sockeye salmon each accounted for less than 1%.
The CPUE was 90.1 fish/100 m²/12 h, with a biomass of 0.93 kg/100 m²/12 h.
Shoreline electrofishing recorded 18 individuals, which were identified to species and measured for total length. Perch (n = 9; 50%) were most abundant, followed by rudd (n = 6), chub (n = 2) and roach (n = 1).

The capture-mark-recapture (CMR) method was carried out to assess the fish populations in Erlaufsee and Gleinkersee. The most abundant fish species in Erlaufsee was represented by 3325 individuals of roach, followed by 1152 whitefish, perch (n = 888), rudd (n = 190), chub (n = 52) tenches (n = 22), pike (n = 19). In Gleinkersee mainly roach (n = 565) was detected, rudds (n = 384), perch (n = 331), whitefish (n = 23), pike (n = 16) and 14 individuals of chub.
For reliable outcome of fish abundance, the CMR-method demands 10 % of recapture. The critical value of 10 % could be reached for roach and whitefish in Gleinkersee and for perch with almost 10 % in Erlaufsee. Therefore, out of seven observed fish species in Gleinkersee, the abundance could be evaluated for only two of them (roach and whitefish).

The detection of aquatic species with eDNA shows great potential for the future. Since it was possible to analyse further fish species with eDNA, vice versa, other fish species could be detected with the other techniques, the application of eDNA could support gathering as many aquatic species as possible. The different methods would complement each other by detecting different fish species, allowing a broader range of species to be recorded. Furthermore, eDNA serves as a quick and easy technique to analyse the presence or absence of crayfish plague (Aphanomyces astaci) in freshwaters.

Incorporation of study results into regular sampling by the Member State:

The collection of data on fish stocks in freshwater lakes cannot be compared to the sampling schemes for marine Member States as described in Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/39 laying down rules on the format and timetables for the submission of national work plans and annual reports on data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. There is no legal obligation to collect data on these stocks at EU level. However, the data collected will be digitalized and uploaded in the national fish database (FDA) administered by the Federal Agency for Water Management of Austria.

The project intends to create a management plan for each lake and to develop a method and a standardized guideline for a sustainable, non-lethal method for fish and crayfish stock assessment for small alpine lakes to ensure their long-term preservation.

Text Box 1b: Other data collection activities

Activity B: Fish-Ecological Survey and Biomass Estimation of *Coregonus sp* in Lake Zell ("Zeller See")

General comment: Use this text box to provide information on other data collection activities that relate to your EMFAF operational programme and need to be included in the work plan and the annual report. Describe activities that are funded by the DCF but fulfil objectives under other EMFAF priorities, like marine knowledge, or activities funded by the DCF, but without a direct link to the EU MAP specific requirements or WP template tables, like freshwater fisheries. You can also include one-off specific studies for a particular end-user need that do not enter the regular data collection.

1. Aim of the data collection activity

An investigation in 2020 showed changes in spawning maturity of whitefish *(Coregonus sp)* compared to 2006 in lake Zell („Zellersee"). In addition, a relatively high biomass was found. In general, an earlier spawning maturity in Alpine lakes has been discovered in recent years - previously in 4+/3+ year classes, currently often in 2+ or even 1+. Climate change could be one of the explanations.
The management measures in lake Zell should therefore be changed towards increased catches via a reduced minimum conservation reference size and higher catches per licence. In order to monitor the implications of these changes, the most important parameters of the *Coregonus sp* population should be monitored annually in addition to the total biomass towards the end of the project using scientific hydroaccustic methods. Based on the results of these surveys, changes can be responded to while the multiannual data series will contribute to sustainable fisheries in lake Zell.

2. Duration of the data collection activity

June 2023-December 2025

3. Methodology and expected outcomes of the data collection activity

150-200 individual *Coregonus sp* will be caught every year using gillnets with graduated mesh sizes or with

Nordic multimesh nets. This should allow to catch all year classes equally well. The fishing trips will be carried out once a year end September/early October. The same effort will be used every year to make the catches comparable. The caught *Coregonus sp* will be measured, weighed and analysed for distinctive features such as injuries or parasites. In addition, scales will be taken for age determination. Sex and maturity will also be analysed. Age determination will be carried out in the laboratory. Six cleaned and dried scales will be put in a double glass frame, projected on the wall and the annual rings will be counted. In order to avoid mistakes, there will always be two persons doing the age determination without previous knowledge of length and weight. The results will be presented as histograms or plots using the average weight and length of the respective year classes. After every fishing trip a brief intermediate report containing the most relevant data of the *Coregenus sp* population will be generated to adapt the management measures accordingly. At the end of the project a final report will be drawn up.
The estimation of the fish biomass will be carried out with a scientific echosounder of the company SIMRAD (EK 60 or EK 80 with a composite split beam transducer) and a working frequency of 120 kHz. The images will be taken along the transsects of the 2020 investigation (mentioned at the start) at three different dates in autumn and winter. The recordings will be taken at night. The speed of the boat will be approximately 5-6 km/h. The echosounder will be calibrated with a calibration ball. Data will be saved during the recordings. The analysis will be done with a computer programme, namely SONAR 5-Pro. The results will contain abundance, length distribution and the total biomass. They will be presented in the intermediate and final reports.
The combination of a classic catching method with gillnets and modern echosound technology should be strengthened, to modernise fisheries management in our lakes and to consequently optimise sustainable catches.

Activity B: Fish-Ecological Survey and Biomass Estimation of Coregonus sp. in Lake Zell ("Zeller See")

Brief description of the results (including deviations from the plan and justifications as to why if this was the case).

A total of 240 whitefish (Coregonus sp.) were caught in 2024 by gillnet fishery. In the open water nets, 81.7% (n = 196) of the total net catches were caught, and 18.3% (n = 44) in the bottom nets, respectively. The total weight of the whitefish in open water nets was 41.8 kg, and 5.1 kg in benthic nets. The catch results were thus very similar to those of the previous year.

The length frequency of the current catch revealed that almost all size classes were represented, ranging from 7 cm to 41 cm. Specimens from 7 cm to 18 cm in total length were classified as offspring of the year (age = 0+). Up to a total length of 37 cm, size classes were caught almost without interruption, followed by only one specimen of 41 cm. The most common size classes were 31 cm (n = 32) and 32 cm (n = 29). The low density of individuals larger than 37 cm was significantly different from the previous year.

The almost complete distribution of the length classes corresponded well with the age structure. The current age structure consists of individuals from 0+ (young of the year) to 6+ years old. The numerous catches of individuals aged 0+ indicated once again a successful reproduction in Lake Zell. The age classes 1+, 2+, 3+, and 4+ year-old whitefish were also well represented.

An average weight of 229 g was recorded for the 30 cm size class in 2024. This value was slightly lower than 2022 (238.1 g) and 2023 (232 g), but higher than 2020 (222.5 g).

To document the nutritional status of the whitefish in Lake Zell, the Fulton's condition factor was calculated. With a mean value of 0.77 (±0.08; n = 240), it was similar to previous surveys and in line with other studies of lakes with whitefish stocks investigated by the BAW-IGF.

The investigation of sexual maturity in whitefish in Lake Zell is a very important aim of the present survey. In the current fishing study, mature individuals could already be detected from a total length of 25 cm; from a total length of 31 cm, 96% of the individuals were sexually mature. These size classes, which are rather small for potential spawning stock, show a high density in Lake Zell and should be reduced, if possible.

In terms of fish age, 16.6% of the 2+ year-old fish could be classified as sexually mature (2023: 29%; 2022: 25%; 2020: 56.3%). From the age of 3+ years, 96% of the examined whitefish were sexually mature.

In 2024, the minimum size (Brittelmaß) for angling whitefish was reduced to 32 cm. As mentioned above, the

majority of whitefish were ready to spawn at this length. In addition, a conservation window of 40 cm to 44 cm total length was suggested to enhance successful natural reproduction within these size classes. According to the literature, the protection of large individuals stabilizes the dynamics of a fish population.

The hydroacoustic recordings showed a further increase in total fish biomass in 2024 (200 kg/ha) compared to 2020 and 2023 (183 kg/ha and 177 kg/ha, respectively). This high level places Lake Zell clearly above the reference value for a type-specific lake (86 kg/ha). The distribution of biomass among the individual lake areas (transects) was similar across all years. In terms of abundance (fish/ha), a recent increase was observed in the vast majority of fish lengths. Since 2020, a significant increase has been evident in fish up to 40 cm in length, while abundances above this size remained comparable. Overall, this natural development (successful reproduction followed by growth) caused a shift in length-weight proportions from over 40 cm (2020) to the range between 20 cm and 40 cm (2023 and 2024). Increased harvesting in the 30 cm to 40 cm range is therefore highly recommended. In the sub-range 31 cm to 35 cm, this should be carried out with mandatory removal, as these fish have already reached spawning maturity and pose a risk of growth stagnation due to high density.

Deviation from the Plan

The only deviation from the original study design is that hydroacoustic recordings will be carried out in a different annual distribution, as already mentioned in the 2023 report. Thus, two surveys per year will be conducted over three years (2023, 2024, and 2025) instead of the originally planned three recordings in two years (2023 and 2025). This means that the total number of hydroacoustic surveys will remain the same, only redistributed over time.

Achievement of the Original Expected Outcomes

The results obtained are largely in line with expectations. The whitefish population continues to be characterized by high densities, a good age structure, and very successful natural reproduction. Based on the ongoing study, very detailed recommendations could be made for fisheries management. As a result, in the last two years the findings of the previous surveys were included in the fishery regulations for the following fishing season.

Incorporation of Study Results into Regular Sampling by the Member State

As planned, this study demonstrates that a very comprehensive insight into the whitefish population of a lake can be gained by regular experimental fishing with multi-mesh gillnets in the fall. Additionally, biomass estimation using hydroacoustics also sheds light on the quantitative aspect. Based on these data, detailed recommendations for a dynamically adapted fishery management strategy can be developed. In the future, this approach should be incorporated into lake fisheries management in Austria.

Text Box 1b: Other data collection activities

Activity C: Organic Aquaculture Production

General comment: Use this text box to provide information on other data collection activities that relate to your EMFAF operational programme and need to be included in the work plan and the annual report. Describe activities that are funded by the DCF but fulfil objectives under other EMFAF priorities, like marine knowledge, or activities funded by the DCF, but without a direct link to the EU MAP specific requirements or WP template tables, like freshwater fisheries. You can also include one-off specific studies for a particular end-user need that do not enter the regular data collection.

1. Aim of the data collection activity

The aim of the study is to create a reliable and sound baseline for organic aquaculture production in Austria in order to measure progress towards the objective of the national programme under EMFAF 2021-2027, namely to sustainably increase organic aquaculture production.

2. Duration of the data collection activity

2023-2025

3. Methodology and expected outcomes of the data collection activity

Currently, data about aquaculture production and its value are collected according to regulation (EC) 762/2008 on the submission by Member States of statistics on aquaculture implemented in Austria through "Verordnung des Bundesministers für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft betreffend die Statistik über die Aquakulturproduktion 2012" – see BGBl 344/2012 (available in German only). Neither the EU regulation nor the Austrian implementing ordinance require data collection on organic aquaculture production. Discussions to modify the regulation (EC) 762/2008 have been ongoing for quite some time, but no official proposal by the European Commission has materialised so far.

The European Commission's Communication "A Farm to Fork Strategy" (COM(2020) 381 final) called for a significant increase in organic aquaculture. This objective has been repeated in the Commission's Communication on an "Action Plan for the Development of Organic Production" (COM(2021) 141 final) and in the "Strategic Guidelines for a More Sustainable and Competitive Aquaculture for the Period 2021 to 2030" (COM(2021) 236 final).

Austria's National Programme under EMFAF 2021-2027 also contains the same objective. The amount of organic aquaculture production shall be increased sustainably. A reliable baseline is essential to monitor progress towards this objective. A critical assessment of the current data on organic production showed that there is room for improvement in particular for the organic production of salmonids.

Therefore – and as a first step - the annual data collection under regulation (EC) 762/2008 will be amended by a request for additional information on organic production in volume of fish for human consumption per fish species. The current questionnaire (online and paper version) will be complemented by a column "organic production". After a trial period of one year, an evaluation will be carried out to determine if the replies are sufficient and as complete as possible. If necessary an adapted or extended version will be developed.

This project is without a direct link to the EU MAP specific requirements or WP template tables. However it fulfils objectives under other EMFAF priorities, namely Priority 2 "Fostering sustainable aquaculture activities and processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, thus contributing to food security in the Union". Furthermore, it is perfectly in line with the Farm-to-Fork-Strategy and the Strategic Guidelines for a More Sustainable and Competitive EU-Aquaculture 2021-20230.

Activity C: Organic Aquaculture Production

At the start of the project, there was no legal obligation to report data on organic aquaculture production. Therefore, these data were collected on a voluntary basis for the reference year 2022. Without any legal obligation, only few enterprises provided data. Unfortunately, the response rate, coverage and data quality were low which prevented the publication of the results. Without other data sources for organic aquaculture production, there is no possibility for cross-checking or imputation of results.

Therefore, an ordinance - amending the current ordinance on aquaculture statistics - was issued to make data collection on organic aquaculture production mandatory (available in German: Änderung der Aquakulturstatistik-Verordnung 2012). This activity is in line with the first step described in the work plan.

Achievement of the original expected outcomes of the study and justification if this was not the case.

The amendment of the existing ordinance was completed by its publication on 16 October 2023. This was, however, too late for the survey for the reference year 2022. With the amended ordinance in force a higher response rate, coverage and hence data quality for the upcoming aquaculture

survey for the reference year 2023 are expected.

In 2023 the second year of implementation of the national regulation first results are available.

Bio-Speisefischproduktion 2023

Fischordnung/Fischart	Produktion in kg Lebendgewicht
	2023
Fischordnung	
Lachsartige	342 263
Karpfenartige	138 195
Sonstige	2 759
Produktion insgesamt	**483 217**

Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Aquakulturproduktion. – Im Sinne von „speisefertig" nach marktüblichen Größen, unabhängig von ihrer tatsächlichen weiteren Verwendung. – Erstellt am 18.12.2024.

The production of organic fish in Austria was 483.217 kg. This corresponds to 9.3 % of total aquaculture production. As the survey was not yet mandatory in 2022, its results are not meaningful. Therefore, no back-calculations could be made. The current results from 2023 can be presented, but must be validated with the figures for the coming years.

<u>Incorporation of study results into regular sampling by the Member State.</u>

*The collection of data on organic aquaculture production cannot be compared to the sampling schemes for **marine** Member States as described in Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/39 laying down rules on the format and timetables for the submission of national work plans and annual reports on data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Nevertheless, with the new ordinance, data collection on organic aquaculture production will be carried out on a regular basis from the reference year 2023 onwards.*

Text Box 1b: Other data collection activities

Activity D: Supporting the SECWEB-Project

General comment: Use this text box to provide information on other data collection activities that relate to your EMFAF operational programme and need to be included in the work plan and the annual report. Describe activities that are funded by the DCF but fulfil objectives under other EMFAF priorities, like marine knowledge, or activities funded by the DCF, but without a direct link to the EU MAP specific requirements or WP template tables, like freshwater fisheries. You can also include one-off specific studies for a particular end-user need that do not enter the regular data collection.

1. Aim of the data collection activity

Support the operation and functioning of the RCG´s Secretariat for a fluent regional coordination of data collection activities.

2. Duration of the data collection activity

01/01/2023 – 31/12/2025

3. Methodology and expected outcomes of the data collection activity

The Secretariat´s organizational structured has been set up and pilot tested throughout SecWeb project. The key functions of the RCG´s Secretariat have been determined in close collaboration with all RCGs, in particular with RCG and Intersessional Subgroups (ISSGs) chairs. A business model has been developed. In addition, good practices in communication within and among the RCGs have been promoted and installed. The overall capacity to reach out to a wider public and increase the visibility of the work and output of the

RCGs has been boosted with the development of a dedicated website and the consolidation of a visual identity.
RCG chairs and the RCG´s network in general have acknowledged the added value of having an RCG´s Secretariat to the overall aim of improving data collection activities.
Based on SecWeb project outputs the proposed data collection activity will connect the whole RCG network and stakeholders to work together on common goals. The Secretariat provides fluent administrative and coordination support for more efficient regional coordination liberating national experts involved in data collection activities from heavy burden administrative tasks.
Overall expected outcomes

- A full-time dedicated Secretariat support service for the RCGs enables a consistent approach to administering RCG activities, facilitates communication, and enhances the intersessional work, supporting also the work of sub-groups.
- A dynamic and permanently updated website will be kept available including as features:
    - Integration – allowing seamless synchronization with third-party information needs and requests
    - Responsive display – to serve content across multiple devices, screens, and browsers
    - User experience- maintaining a satisfactory user experience throughout the website sections
    - Accessibility – To any interested visitor in a user-friendly way across the website sections
    - Retention- keeping visitors coming back to the website
    - Links to relevant restricted access sites and virtual environments.
- The Visual identity for the RCGs is increasingly consolidated and visibility and understanding of the work by the RCGs is enhanced for the relevant stakeholder groups.
- A regularly updated Stakeholders' database improves the communication function among the RCGs' experts and the stakeholders' community.
- Internal communication protocols and help-desk in place makes it easier for any new comer to efficiently join, adopt responsibilities, and contribute to the RCGs objectives and work commitments.
- The public description of the secretariat functions, operational working protocols and commitments will build trust and enhance the whole network transparency and accountability.

Activity D: Supporting the SECWEB-Project

During 2023 the RCGs Secretariat services and tools were financed by a short-term/low value contract by the individual Member States (23 out of 26 MS) together with a European Commission service contract running from the end of August 2023 to end of February 2024. These contracts enabled the full-scale operation of the RCGs Secretariat along the year (from March 2023 until Feb 2024).

The pan regional ISSG National Correspondents continued the discussions on how to implement the long-term stabilization of the services and tools and ran several consultations with the MS. A main conclusion from these, is the fact that the administrative procedures at national level are a continuous and complex constraint for some of the MS.

Further discussions on the long-term funding scenarios are planned during 2024. The objective is to develop and implement the long-term funding solution for the RCGs Secretariat and the tools, while simultaneously, a suitable approach needs to be found to keep the services and tools working continuously to guarantee the support to the RCGs and the LM"

Achievement of the original expected outcomes of the study and justification if this was not the case.

See above

Incorporation of study results into regular sampling by the Member State.
Not applicable

Text Box 6.1: Economic and social variables for aquaculture data collection

General comment: This text box fulfils Article 5(2) (e), Article 6(3) (a), (b) and (c) of Regulation (EU) 2017/1004, and Chapter II point 6 of the EU MAP Delegated Decision annex. It is intended to specify the data to be collected under Tables 10 and 11 of the EU MAP Delegated Decision annex.

1. Description of the threshold application

According to https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tag00075/default/table?lang=en the EU's aquaculture production in 2020 was 1.070.165, 0277 tonnes, while Austria's production in the same year amounted to 4.526, 915 tonnes, which represents 0,42 % of the EU's production. According to Chapter II Para 7 of the Commission's Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168, there is no obligation for Member States to collect socio-economic data on a regular basis if there aquaculture production is below 1 % of the EU's production.

2. Deviation from the RCG ECON (ex. PGECON) definitions

Not applicable

Deviations from the work plan

Not applicable.

According to https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tag00075/default/table?lang=en the EU's aquaculture production in 2023 was 1.050.637 tonnes, while Austria's production in the same year was 5.170 tonnes, which represents 0,49% % of the EU's production. Hence, there is still no obligation to collect socio-economic data on a regular basis. Figures for 2024 are not yet available.

Actions to avoid deviations

Not applicable.