

FISHERIES SERVICES

CZECH REPUBLIC

The provision of services to the fish-farm industry (fish-breeding in ponds and the production of freshwater fish).

a) Veterinary services

- The State veterinary authorities and their district branches offer the following services (fees are charged to clients, or producers in the case of fish-farming):
 - analysis of fish samples;
 - examinations for a range of infectious diseases;
 - veterinary inspections required e.g. for imports/exports;
 - veterinary certificates.
- Private veterinary surgeons offer the following services:
 - routine examinations;
 - veterinary inspections required e.g. for imports/exports;
 - veterinary certificates, etc.

b) Research services

In the Czech Republic, the two leading fisheries research centres are the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice and the Research Institute for Fisheries and Hydrobiology in Vodňany. They also work on research commissioned from abroad.

The Research Institute for Fisheries and Hydrobiology, established in Prague in 1921, moved to Vodňany in 1953. Since 1996, the Institute has been part of the University of České Budějovice. The services offered by these institutions include:

- detecting diseases in ponds and watercourses;
- diagnosing and treating diseases in freshwater fish;
- conducting research into the structural balance of aquatic stocks;
- conducting research to improve fish-farming techniques;
- analysing water quality;
- producing expert reports.

In the Czech Republic, similar services may also be provided by the University of Charles IV (Faculty of Sciences) and Agencies reporting to the Ministry of the Environment. Fees are charged for all services.

c) Infrastructure services

These mainly concern the roads and motorways used to transport fish and equipment. Vehicles under 12 tonnes must display “toll coupons”, while those over 12 tonnes are subject to electronic tolls.

Like any company, public and private limited liability companies in the fish-farming industry are charged for their water and power supplies.

As for the ponds used for fish-farming, they are located either on private land or on rented government land.

d) Services provided by the Czech Fish Farm Association

This Association was founded in 1991 and offers farmers the following services:

- Giving information and professional advice;
- Providing sales and marketing services;
- Individual services on specific issues;
- Collecting and analysing data on damage by predators;
- Publishing periodicals;
- Informing consumers and promoting the consumption of freshwater fish.

These are fee-paying services and constitute the Association's business activities.

e) Services provided by the Czech Federation of Food and Drink Industries

Another association providing services relating to fish-farming in the Czech Republic is the *Potravinářská komora České republiky* (Czech Federation of Food and Drink Industries), or PK ČR.

PK ČR is a federation of firms in the food and drink industries (established by Act No. 40/64 Sb of the Civil Code). PK ČR operates throughout the country, and several of its activities relate to the provision of services. Its main activities are as follows:

- Representing the interests of the food and processing industries vis-à-vis the authorities of the Czech State, the European Union and international organisations;
- Acting as a specialist consultancy for agricultural production;
- Dealing with observations on the relevant legislation;
- Working with the other organisations and associations involved with food and drink products.

PK ČR is also involved in:

- Publishing and sales promotion;
- Information systems relating to the food industries;
- Consultancy work in areas such as legislation, economic activities and marketing.

Clients are charged fees for the services provided by the Federation of Food and Drink Industries.

2. Service provision is based on self-regulation.

Services are charged to clients. They do not need to be regulated by government. In the case of fish-farming, there are three main pieces of legislation which indirectly affect fish-farming activities and services.

A) The Water Act (No. 254/2001), which came into force on 1 January 2002, imposes certain obligations:

- It is mandatory, for instance, to have a drainage plan or lay down procedures for operating and handling hydraulic installations.
- These specific obligations may be tied to service provision (e.g. hiring specialised firms for work/services).

B) The Fisheries and Fish-farming Act (No 99/2004) which came into force on 1 April 2004.

C) The Nature and Landscape Conservation Act (No 114/1992), which came into force on 1 June 1992.

Decisions based on the latter (C) may on the contrary rule out some services (e.g. banning a new pond on environmental grounds). Any prohibitions and restrictions (public announcements and decisions) are published, and the information is freely available, particularly on the Internet.

3. Are the services provided as a regulatory obligation?

The services provided within the framework of fish-farming are neither regulated nor restricted. In theory the services are available to anyone with sufficient interest and financial resources to pay for them. Services may only be provided within the framework of the current legislation.

Some services may also be of a mandatory nature, usually those relating to the export/import of fish or fishery products (the most common example being the issue of veterinary certificates).

The Czech Republic, as a member of the European Union since 2004, complies with EU legislation and the obligations and restrictions relating thereto. Under Czech law, all entrepreneurs, including fish-farm operators, must be licensed to conduct their business.

4. Service providers

Foreign service providers must complete all the formalities and meet all the requirements applicable to Czech service providers. This means having a valid licence under Czech law. From the client's point of view the situation is identical, whether the service is delivered by a foreign or a Czech provider. Other factors will determine the choice of a provider (mainly cost, quality and delivery times).

5. Regulatory environment for service provision

In general, all services must be provided within the framework of the legislation prevailing in the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic has been a member of the European Union since 2004. Therefore, all services provided in the Czech Republic must also be in compliance with EU legislation.

Domestic legislation on fish-farming consists of laws, government orders and regulations.

Measures approved internationally (*e.g.* Codex Alimentarius) or under EU legislation obviously influence domestic legislation (national provisions relating to foodstuffs, including fishery products).

With regard to fish-farming in the Czech Republic, there are of course bilateral agreements on cross-border watercourses. These may have an impact on pond fish-farming locally. That in turn may also affect service provision. Another example is the Ramsar Convention on wetlands, signed in Ramsar (Iran) in 1971. This intergovernmental treaty, which serves as a framework for domestic policy and international co-operation for the conservation and sustainable utilisation of wetlands and their resources, could affect the management and services involved in Czech fish-farming.