

---

# AUDIENCES FOR EUROPEAN THEATRE

Draft for a Research Project for the European Theatre Convention

Institute for Arts and Media Management (IKM), Free University Berlin  
Version, 21.03.2013

## Motivation

This research design is meant to establish an integrated framework for providing knowledge about audiences for European theatre. Research on audiences shall be accompanied by research and evaluation of strategies and measures of audience development.

The research concept is focused on member theatres of ETC. Theatres participating in the research activities can develop knowledge and experiences that will make them competence centres in their countries. Especially in those countries where the practice of audience development and audience research is still less established than in others they can thus be the nucleus for further development.

## Project Approach and Methods

The design includes research on four levels that demand different degrees of experience and resources from participating houses. Therefore member theatres should decide on their participation in the different project levels according to their experience and resources. As a basis for this decision IKM will host a workshop at the start of project activities.

### Level 1:

Reporting of basic figures on the number of productions, performances and audiences.

These basic figures should be collected annually with a standardised questionnaire in all member theatres. The basis for the figures to be defined are the figures that were already collected from 15 theatres in 2012.

They will allow basic comparison between theatres and establish timeline data for identifying broad trends. Productions and performances with specific „European“, transnational nature (guest performances, co-productions) shall be represented separately.

### Level 2:

Status quo in audience development and audience research

The existing knowledge about audiences and the experience audience research and audience development shall be collected in all partner theatres. The information would be raised with partly quantitative and partly open question. The questions will be integrated with the question from basic figures in *Level 1* into one questionnaire.

This overview will serve as reference point for the activities in this research project, but also for other future activities in audience development and audience research.

The information should cover:

- What knowledge exists about their audiences? (e.g. structure, habits, media usage etc.)
- What type of audience research has been conducted up to now?
- What strategies and measures of audience development, specifically for the above defined „European“ theatre, have been adopted previously?

### Level 3:

#### Exemplary audience research in selected partner theatres

In a number of partner theatres (between seven and a maximum of ten) exemplary representative audience research would be carried out.

The research would be based on a modular questionnaire. The core module should include a set of relevant sociodemographic information. It would have to be used in all theatres participating in the audience research level. It will allow the comparison between theatres and help to identify parts of local societies that are underrepresented in the theatres' audiences.

For more in-depth research several modules (sets of questions) would be developed:

- Motives and expectations (towards the theatres and/or towards culture and leisure activities in general)
- Visiting patterns (specifically for the theatre and for culture and leisure activities in general)
- Satisfaction with the theatre in general and with different aspects of their work and their offers
- Image of the theatres and their perceived value to the public
- Patterns of communication patterns and media usage

This level will provide knowledge of specific audiences in the participating theatres that other partner theatres can compare with.

In the definition of questions and the analysis the audience for transnational European productions would be compared to the general audience. Thus specific characteristics of audiences for this theatre could be identified and goals for the future development of additional audiences could be established.

Member theatres that recently have performed audience research could be included in this level. By contributing the existing data the scope of comparison and interpretation is broadened, their experience will help other theatres in setting up research according to the specific needs of the individual houses. They might either just contribute existing information or take advantage of the project to repeat the research.

Other member theatres can easily adopt the research methodology established in this project afterwards.

### Level 4:

#### Exemplary in-depth evaluation of audience development activities

In a restricted number of theatres (three to a maximum to five), audience development activities are evaluated through qualitative research.

The evaluation would target selected audience development activities identified in *Level 2*. The experiences of participants in these activities would be collected in qualitative interviews. They would be juxtaposed to the description from members of the theatre that were actively involved in these audience development measures. From the direct juxtaposition it can be evaluated if and under which conditions the experiences of participants fulfil the objectives

sought for. Specific attention will be given on audience development related to transnational activities.

The results from this qualitative research shall be interpreted with reference to knowledge from quantitative audience research. Therefore theatres participating in *Level 4* should also take part in *Level 3*.

Integration:

Interpretation, Consulting and Publication

Knowledge from all four research levels shall be integrated. The analysis of integrated results on audiences will allow overarching conclusions and identification of both general and specific challenges.

Results will be presented in a workshop with all member theatres. In this workshop directions for further analysis of results could be identified. At the same time the key findings would be identified and their use in the work of ETC discussed. On this basis a project report would be elaborated. The project's results can be jointly presented in conferences or for international organisation (e.g. bodies of the EU).

Depending on the interest from member theatres the IKM can consult individual theatres.

## Work Packages

*Level 1 & Level 2:*

Collecting basic data and status quo in audience development / audience research

FU Berlin	ETC	Member Theatres
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workshop on questionnaire content</li> <li>- Develop questionnaire</li> <li>- Distributing questionnaire</li> <li>- Support theatres in completing questionnaire</li> <li>- Integration and interpretation of results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide contacts in theatres</li> <li>- Support in contacting member theatres</li> <li>- Support in the organisation of workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete questionnaire</li> </ul>

*Level 3*

Exemplary audience research

FU Berlin	Member Theatres
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workshop on questionnaire content and modules</li> <li>- Develop specific questionnaires from modules participating theatres</li> <li>- Enable theatre personnel in distributing questionnaire</li> <li>- Assist in recording completed questionnaires</li> <li>- Data analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribute questionnaires</li> <li>- Record completed questionnaires</li> </ul>

**Level 4**

Exemplary audience research

<b>FU Berlin</b>	<b>Member Theatres</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guideline development</li> <li>- Recruiting</li> <li>- Identify interview partners in participating theatres</li> <li>- Perform interviews</li> <li>- Transcription, coding and analysis of interviews</li> <li>- Visualisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide interview partners that are active in targeted audience development activities</li> <li>- Recruit participants in audience research activities as research interview partners</li> </ul>

## Project Schedule

2013									2014		
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Identification of participating member theatres											
Development of Guidelines and Questionnaires											
	Distribution, Completion of questionnaire for basic data and status quo										
		Preparation for research in member theatres									
			Exemplary audience research								
					Exemplary evaluation of audience development						
						Data analysis					
								Workshop: Results and interpretation			
									Refinement of data analysis		
									Preparation of report formats		
									Consulting of individual member theatres		

## Project Resources

To be defined with ETC