

# Sustainability & Theatre: ETC Theatre Green Book

---

Applied  
Research Study

**SUSTAINABILITY & THEATRE:  
ETC THEATRE GREEN BOOK**

—

*Applied Research Study*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	5
----------	---

### Part One

<b>Making The ETC Theatre Green Book</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The role of theatre and culture in the transition to net zero</b>	<b>8</b>
The importance of theatre and culture	9
Sustainable theatre: the story so far	9
The common goal: net zero by 2030	11
<b>Principles of guidance for sustainable theatre</b>	<b>12</b>
Collective Action	12
Practical Guidance	12
A Systematic Approach	13
Measurable Action	13
<b>The ETC Theatre Green Book</b>	<b>15</b>
Background to the international Theatre Green Book initiative	15
The European Theatre Convention	16
The Opole Recommendations	16
Making the ETC Theatre Green Book : methodology	18
Self-certification	19

### Part Two

<b>Using the ETC Theatre Green Book</b>	
<b>Case Studies from the ETC Theatre Green Book focus group</b>	<b>20</b>
Teatro Arriaga, Bilbao	21
Deutsches Theater, Berlin	24
Narodni Divadlo, Prague	27
Norske Teatret, Oslo	29
Staatsschauspiel, Dresden	32
Théâtre de Liège	35
Toneelmakerij, Amsterdam	38
Young Vic, London	41
Het Zuidlijk Toneel, Tilburg	45
<b>Challenges identified</b>	<b>48</b>
Sharing problems	48
Time	48
The creative challenge	48
Touring	49

Storage	49
Buildings	49
Heritage	50

### Part Three

<b>The Pathway to 2030</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Timeline to 2030</b>	<b>53</b>
The Challenge	53
The Timeline	53
<b>Using theatre's networks</b>	<b>55</b>
The European Theatre Convention	55
Other networks	56
<b>Support and learning</b>	<b>57</b>
Case studies	57
Toolkits	57
Peer-to-peer learning	58
<b>Self-Certification</b>	<b>59</b>
Self-certification: principle	59
Self-certification: practice	60
<b>Measuring results</b>	<b>61</b>
Measuring practice	61
Measuring circularity	62
Measuring carbon	62

### Part Four

<b>What stands in the way of net zero theatre?</b>	<b>64</b>
Macro-blockers	65
Challenges for Sustainable Productions	65
Challenges for sustainable operations	66
Challenges for sustainable buildings	67
 About the ETC Theatre Green Book	<b>68</b>
About the self-certification	<b>69</b>
About the Author	<b>70</b>
About the Study	<b>72</b>
About ETC	<b>73</b>
About Renew Culture	<b>74</b>
ETC Publications	<b>75</b>
ETC Members	<b>76</b>
ETC Contact	<b>77</b>



From 'Beneatha's Place' by Young Vic  
© Johan Persson

## FOREWORD

I am delighted to present this applied study on the creation and implementation of the 'ETC Theatre Green Book'. This new piece of research offers insights into the status quo of where we are on our journey towards sustainability in the European theatre sector with concrete research-based advice and measures for theatres to undergo a sustainable transformation of their productions, operations and buildings.

In June 2021, the ETC theatres committed to a bold and visionary goal: achieving climate neutrality by 2030. This decision, which now links over 60 major theatres as part of the largest network of publicly funded theatres in Europe, was driven by an urgent recognition that global efforts to meet sustainable development goals and limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius were insufficient. It was also a firm statement of belief that European artists could and should lead the way towards a more sustainable future.

Embarking on this journey was a leap into the unknown. Could we actually enact meaningful change? Would our solutions be applicable across Europe, given its diverse funding structures, social contexts, geographic variations, and theatrical traditions? And, perhaps most importantly, how practical would it be to implement these changes?

The ETC Theatre Green Book is the result. Developed in collaboration with Renew Culture, the creators of the original Theatre Green Book, this resource has been meticulously tailored to meet the unique needs of European theatres. It provides a straightforward, step-by-step

approach for achieving net zero emissions in theatre productions, buildings, and operations. Tested extensively in various European theatre contexts, the ETC Theatre Green Book offers a practical and adaptable framework that is essential for our collective goal of climate neutrality.

This study not only documents the creation of the ETC Theatre Green Book, but also shares insights and experiences from its initial implementation. Nine ETC theatres (the 'Focus Group') participated in a year-long trial, providing invaluable case studies that illuminate both the obstacles encountered and the successful strategies employed. Their journeys underscore the importance of robust support from policymakers and the broader cultural sector as we strive towards sustainability.

As you delve into this study, I hope you will share our optimism and dedication. The ETC Theatre Green Book is more than just a guide; it is a catalyst for change, demonstrating that sustainable theatre is not only possible, but also creatively enriching. Together, we can transform the European cultural landscape, ensuring a thriving and sustainable future for all.

**Heidi Wiley**

*Executive Director, ETC*

# ETC Theatre Green Book



*by*  
**Paddy Dillon & Lisa Burger**

# Making The ETC Theatre Green Book

## The role of theatre and culture in the transition to net zero

### The importance of theatre and culture

Culture has an essential role to play in our transition to a sustainable society. Culture has the ability to explore ideas, to give expression to abstract notions, and to generate the paradigm shift in our attitudes which must accompany any meaningful steps towards a sustainable future. Theatre, as one of Europe's most dynamic and emotive cultural sectors, needs to be a part of that wider cultural movement.

To play a leading role in this continent-wide social dialogue, theatre must itself become sustainable. It may be small by comparison with many industrial and service sectors. But theatre will only earn the right to lead this vital conversation if it becomes sustainable itself.

Besides, by employing theatre's creativity and integrity to demonstrate a viable and dynamic sustainable future, theatre can act as an exemplar and pioneer of transition for other sectors both inside and beyond culture. Two years after the first appearance of the Theatre Green Book, theatre has powerful momentum for change. Well-known theatres across Europe are working in more sustainable ways. If the lessons learnt in theatre can be followed by other cultural sectors, then it is plausible to imagine the whole of culture achieving the transition to net zero. With such a complex and high-profile sector on the way to a successful transition, a net zero society will no longer seem so far out of reach.

### Sustainable theatre: the story so far

The need for theatre to transition to climate neutral working has long been recognised. Indeed, theatre was relatively early to begin sharing ideas, to declare climate emergency, and to campaign for change. Julie's Bicycle and Creative Carbon Scotland (both partners of the Theatre Green Book) were among the first to begin researching and lobbying. Numerous initiatives were launched, many of them now forgotten.

That early work had a powerful impact in raising consciousness among theatre-makers. However, real-world achievement in reducing the climate impact of theatre was slow to follow. Enthusiasm and urgency did not directly translate into meaningful change across the sector.

» A focus on personal commitment is laudable. But changing processes requires not only personal commitment, but a deeper examination of systems, and of the interdependence of individual decisions in shifting overall outcomes.

- » A focus on carbon calculation produced limited improvement. Carbon calculation of complex processes such as theatre-making is extremely difficult to achieve accurately, is subject to much variation in application, and is time-consuming and complicated for theatre-makers to build into their working process.

Theatres, and theatre organisations, often duplicated effort in writing their own sustainability programmes, to the extent that a surfeit of guidance risked progress, since theatre-makers felt unable to choose which path to follow. Initiatives, guidance, programmes and blueprints for transition have come from a number of different sources:

- » Culture-wide climate groups such as Julie's Bicycle, Creative Carbon Scotland, and Broadway Green Alliance.
- » Cultural lead organisations (for example, Pearle\*
- » City / town authorities (for example, Nachhaltiges Dresden).
- » National authorities (for example, the German government's C02-Kulturstandard).
- » Local arts networks (for example, Fédération des Employeurs des Arts de la Scène in Wallonie).
- » Individual theatres (for example Opéra Lyon's OSCaR project).

Some of this guidance is excellent. All of it has helped expand understanding. However, none has achieved a critical mass of change across the sector. Where these systems of guidance overlap, they represent wasted effort. Where they differ, they make it harder for theatres and theatre-makers to learn from each other. The freelance nature of much theatre practice (particularly among directors and designers) left creative teams unable to translate experience from one theatre to another.

A number of other problems also became clear, particularly with the early guidance:

- » Carbon targets set by policy-makers and authorities do not translate readily into practical decision-making for theatre-makers on the ground. Sustainability can involve complex and conflicting choices. Guidance often paid too little attention to the experience of practical theatre-makers.
- » Guidance on sustainability often focuses on what 'net-zero theatre' might eventually look like. However, perfect sustainability cannot be achieved overnight in a world which is not engineered for sustainable working (for example, sustainable freight for touring is still some way out of reach).

What is needed is a transition, rather than an instant solution. Guidance therefore needs to focus not on the eventual endpoint, but the first steps theatres need to take.

By the time of the Covid pandemic, no common practice had emerged across theatre. Much energy had been expended in the attempt to develop 'carbon calculators' for theatre – when in fact, the steps needed to start theatre on the road to sustainability were already possible to identify.

On the plus side, however, theatre-makers had a high awareness of the need to change, and work in an industry where creativity is central, and dynamic change is celebrated. Initiatives such as Stages harnessed that dynamism and creativity to explore new approaches to theatre-making, and to open the door to further experimentation.

### **The common goal: net zero by 2030**

Meanwhile, time was running out on the widely-shared aspiration for theatre to become net zero by 2030, in line with the aspiration of successive COPs. Organisations need to understand how they can achieve the transition, plan for major change and measure progress. European, national and city authorities need to understand sectoral progress and impediment to change - local infrastructure, funding or policy - and their opportunity to effect change.

The Theatre Green Book initiative took shape during the first year of the Covid pandemic. It rapidly identified that if theatre was to achieve the transition to net zero within this timeframe, it needed guidance that was:

- » Collective
- » Practical
- » Methodical
- » Measurable

# Principles of guidance for sustainable theatre

## Collective Action

The challenge of sustainable theatre will only be solved if we address it by working together. For every theatre to research and write its own guidance for sustainability represents a waste of resource and time. If we produce multiple guides that say the same thing, we're wasting effort. If each approach is different, we won't be able to learn from each other. To achieve the rapid transition the climate crisis requires, we need to adopt a common approach, with a common language that allows us to spread best practice, compare performance, and make progress together.

## Practical Guidance

Theatre-makers, already over-stretched, are experts in theatre, not physics or sustainability. Targets such as 'reduce carbon footprint by 10% per annum' mean nothing to a workshop head, or stage designer. To be successful, a sustainability initiative needs to translate those principles into concrete actions, and identify realistic ways in which theatre-making systems need to change in order to deliver sustainable outcomes.

Moreover, theatre-making is a complex and bespoke practice. Every production is different. Productions involve an intricate collaboration of different disciplines and departments. Changing it is complex, therefore. To achieve more sustainable outcomes involves not only persuading individuals to change their approach, but looking at the production system as a whole to identify practices and relationships that hinder more sustainable working. That process of system change cannot be only by setting targets from above. It requires intricate examination of the system from within to identify ways of working that can realistically bring about change across the sector.

The Theatre Green Book was developed by combining the practical expertise and experience of theatre-makers of all kinds (from directors to heads of box office, lighting technicians to building managers) with the expertise of a leading international sustainability consultancy. As a result of that process, everything in the guidance is both realistic for theatre-makers, and effective in its impact on sustainability.

## A Systematic Approach

Sustainable theatre requires progress across a wide number of areas, from building sets to running bars and restaurants, from the electric lighting in the foyer to the transport used by audience and staff. With limited staff, resource and knowledge, theatres often find it hard to know where to start. Many take a piecemeal approach, achieving progress in one area while ignoring others that may have more impact.

A successful approach to sustainable theatre must therefore be methodical. It must provide a firm framework for scoping the challenge and planning a response, and a clear structure for tackling the numerous small challenges of sustainable working.

The Theatre Green Book divides the challenge into three clear strands:

- » Sustainable Productions provide guidance in making productions as sustainably as possible.
- » Sustainable Operations targets everything else theatres do, from running foyer and catering operations, through marketing and box office, to management of waste and travel.
- » Sustainable Buildings guides building operators in how to make their buildings (usually the main carbon impact) as sustainable as possible.

## Measurable Action

The climate emergency requires urgent and rapid action to effect a just transition to a more sustainable way of living and working. We can achieve this only by setting clear goals and milestones to ensure our transition is on track.

In the past, the need to measure progress has resulted in a focus on carbon calculation. Experience, however, has shown that while carbon calculation has a role to play, as a practical working tool it is too unwieldy, too inaccurate, and too time-consuming to support decision-making. Theatres are too dissimilar to be compared on the basis of their carbon footprints. Fundamental questions about carbon calculation remain unresolved (for example: should audience travel be ascribed to a theatre, when the audience have also visited restaurants, shops or family during their visit to town). Indeed, each year may differ depending on the numbers of shows a theatre produce, or the route of a touring production.

We do not need to calculate the carbon footprint of each theatre to know the actions needed to reduce its impact on the planet. We already know how to reduce the impact of productions (by more reuse and recycling),



operations (by reducing waste and energy and managing transport), and buildings (by improving insulation and efficiency).

Our measurement of progress therefore needs to focus on:

- » Changing practice (i.e. tracking what theatres are doing differently)
- » Changing results (i.e. tracking the measurable outcomes of that changed practice, in terms of circularity, and of carbon reductions in the principal areas of set-building, travel / transport, and building energy).

Sustainability in theatre involves change across the broad range of a theatre's work, from producing and making shows differently, to printing, transport, digital management, waste, catering, and 'green' improvements to theatre buildings. It is not enough simply to make progress in one area. 'Sustainable theatre' implies a transition in each.

Effective guidance needs to measure progress. The Theatre Green Book defines three standards across all three areas (Productions, Operations, and Buildings):

- » Basic (a meaningful first step in each area)
- » Intermediate
- » Advanced (net zero)

# The ETC Theatre Green Book

## Background to the international Theatre Green Book initiative

The Theatre Green Book took shape during the first year of the Covid pandemic, initially in the UK. Renew Culture Ltd brought together theatre-makers of all kinds, together with sustainability experts Buro Happold to develop a holistic and shared pathway to sustainable theatre. It quickly identified the principles above to generate:

- » A framework for planning the journey to sustainability.
- » Best practice guidance for all aspects of sustainable theatre.
- » Verifiable standards.
- » A benchmarking system to measure progress.

The Theatre Green Book is based on the experience of practical theatre-makers, united with robust sustainability methodology.

Copyright in the Theatre Green Book is shared by Renew Culture Ltd, its co-founder and co-writer, and sustainability experts Buro Happold. Together, they license use of the Theatre Green Book across the world, including in the UK, where the Theatre Green Book is managed by a grouping of the UK's National Theatres and lead sector bodies.

Theatre communities worldwide quickly identified the value of the Theatre Green Book, and requested permissions to translate it. It was immediately recognised, however, that theatre practice varies between different theatre communities (for example, in methods of commissioning and producing productions, and ownership / operation of buildings). It is therefore unrealistic to insist on a single, Green Book, translated rigidly into different languages.

In addition, the more theatre communities share ownership of the Theatre Green Book, the more expertise and experience can be fed into improving it. The Theatre Green Book vision is therefore to establish autonomous networks in theatre communities across Europe (and beyond). Each network can plan its own activities, and adapt the guidance to suit local practice and benefit from local experience. The role of the Green Book's original authors (Renew Culture and Buro Happold) is to foster these networks, and to ensure that all the Green Books remain close enough in principle that theatres can share, co-produce, tour and spread what they learn.

The Theatre Green Book is now established globally as a common approach to sustainable theatre. In the two years since it was fully completed, it has created extraordinary impact on theatre. It has been translated into ten languages. Theatres across the world are using it and sharing what they learn.

Currently, there are Green Book networks operating or being created in Germany, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Holland, the UK, Ireland, Spain, Australia, Taiwan and Japan. The Green Book is by some way the most effective and established shared guidance for sustainable theatre, a European model for collective action which is being adopted across the world.

### **The European Theatre Convention**

The European Theatre Convention is Europe's largest and most active theatre network, incorporating 63 theatres across xx countries. It has a long-term commitment to sustainability, where it has been an active leader in the field.

In February 2023, the ETC launched a partnership with Renew Culture to create an ETC Theatre Green Book for the ETC network. The ETC Theatre Green Book both draws on the expertise and experience of ETC member theatres, and addresses their specific challenges. Since it includes theatres in every European country, it is uniquely placed to reflect the wide range of different production approaches and modes of working across the continent, and therefore to act as a blueprint for other Theatre Green Book networks.

The effect will be to entrench the Theatre Green Book as a shared and widely-recognised blueprint for sustainable theatre.

### **The Opole Recommendations**

The European Theatre Forum met in Opole, Poland, in May 2023, where sustainability and green transitions was one of the three century challenges identified and addressed. It emphasised the need for a robust policy framework for theatre, and created a roadmap aligned with other important policy developments in the cultural sector. Its approach enables the sector to effectively address global challenges and foster collaboration with other creative and cultural sectors.

It recommended the following measures to promote sustainability across the sector:

### **Hard Change**

- » Develop the newly created European Green Theatre Certification, presented during the European Theatre Forum, as a tool to measure the impact of sustainable activity, track progress and ensure sector's accountability.
- » Initiate a coordinated roll-out of the new tool on a sectoral, Member State and EU-level
- » Include a requirement in EU grants for applicants to provide a plan for the circularity of materials used in theatre productions, thereby reducing waste to a minimum.
- » Standardise procedures to provide a legal framework for upcycling, recycling and reusing leftover materials, taking into consideration safety and intellectual property, and establish a certification scheme and an independent audit body for validation.
- » Harmonise regulations across Europe so that historical buildings can be renovated for sustainable and inclusive purposes.

### **Mild Change**

- » Provide the means for the training of the sector to use international standards in terms of carbon assessments and sustainable practices.
- » Create (or provide the means for the creation of) regional platforms where arts organisations can share leftover materials and adapt the conditions of the aforementioned circular economy grant for their own institutions.

### **As immediate actions, it recommended that the European Commission should:**

- » Include in the Creative Europe Greening Strategy the shared assessment tool for a European Green Theatre Certification based on the presented model ETC Theatre Green Book to measure and certify sustainability in theatre, then roll this out on a Member-state and EU level.
- » Develop a requirement in EU grants for applicants to provide a plan for the circularity of materials used in productions.

It called on the European Commission to:

1. Adopt a comparable sustainability assessment tool for theatre to measure and reduce its carbon footprint.
2. Embed the 'New European Theatre Initiative' as a policy action in Creative Europe's work programme in a permanent fashion. Doing so empowers theatre to address the climate crisis in a sustainable manner for the years to come.

3. Set up a specific prize under Creative Europe alongside other sectorial prizes (architecture, music, heritage) to leverage the visibility and coherence of the Theatre Sector at the European Level.
4. Consolidate relations with the Sectors' representatives through regular consultations exercises.

### **Making the ETC Theatre Green Book : methodology**

To create the ETC Theatre Green Book, a focus group was formed of nine volunteer theatres representing a range of different scales, countries and production approaches:

- » Teatro Arriaga, Bilbao
- » Deutsches Theater, Berlin
- » Narodni Divadlo, Prague
- » Norske Teatret, Oslo
- » Staatsschauspiel, Dresden
- » Théâtre de Liège
- » Toneelmakerij, Amsterdam
- » Young Vic, London
- » Het Zuidelijk Toneel, Tilburg

Renew Culture worked intensively with this group to:

- » Teach, Share experience training and build expertise.
- » Identify trial productions to test Green Book principles and standards.
- » Expand guidance for Sustainable Buildings.
- » Refine guidance for Sustainable Operations.
- » Develop and trial a self-certification system to measure progress (see below).

In-person visits to each of these theatres enables Renew Culture to broaden their understanding of how each theatre worked, draw down expertise from individuals within each theatre, spread understanding of sustainability and the ETC Theatre Green Book approach, and answer questions.

Regular sharing of drafts allowed structured feedback.

Meanwhile, other ETC members were kept in touch through webinars and conference updates.

### **Self-certification**

Sustainable theatre requires holistic change across the broad range of a theatre's activities, from productions, through every aspect of their operations, to the impact of their buildings. In the past, theatres have often reported on sustainability progress in a piecemeal fashion. Often, theatres have been hesitant to share progress at all, for fear that they will be accused of green-washing, or that critics might respond by 'calling out' perceived failures of sustainability, such as flying in actors.

The ETC Theatre Green Book's structured approach, with three standards (Basic – Intermediate – Advanced) defined across the three areas of Productions, Operations and Buildings, allows theatres to track their progress overall.

- » It allows them to report to partners and stakeholders on where they are.
- » It measures their progress in transitioning towards net zero working.
- » It creates a more measured narrative, whereby theatres can claim not to 'be sustainable', but simply to have taken first steps on a journey which they acknowledge will take a period of years to complete.

The focus group was wary of a 'policed' third-party certification system (which in any case would involve unacceptable costs. Self-certification, by contrast, provides a clear benchmark to enable theatres to measure their own progress. It provides a kite-mark that will make sustainable theatre more visible, accelerating change across the sector as a whole.

The self-certification process is described in more detail below.

## Part Two

# Using the ETC Theatre Green Book

## Case Studies from the ETC Theatre Green Book focus group

### Teatro Arriaga, Bilbao



From 'Orgia', directed by Calixto Bieito for Teatro Arriaga. © E. Moreno Esquibel

### 'There Were No Limits on My Creativity'

**ETC:** You directed 'ORGIA', which won national artistic awards and was an 'Advanced'-level sustainable production through the ETC Theatre Green Book. What was this experience like?

**Calixto Bieito:** We're proud of everything in ORGIA: the music, the actors, the performances. The production was chosen as the 'Best New Contemporary Lyrical Creation' at the VI Opera XXI awards earlier this year, and just toured to the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona.

In the middle of this, we managed to make ORGIA a fully sustainable production. Because of how we re-used and stored the items used in the costume and set design, it earned 'Advanced' classification, the highest level of sustainability according to the ETC Theatre Green Book.

It's important for me to say is that there were no limits on my creativity during this process. None – not in the staging, the casting, the design, anything. We decided to make the production sustainable, and from there, as a team, we figured it out.

I reject dogma. My approach is based on dialogue and positive energy and consensus. But I also think it's natural to want to work in a way that considers the future of everyone who will be here when we've gone.

And at the end of all of this, you think, wow – we have done something special. It has been possible to make a show sustainable. The process created a good energy and unity between the team, and I hope that this can be communicated to other theatres too.

**ETC: Was this the first time you had worked on a sustainable production?**

**Calixto Bieito:** I had always been interested in the topic and I had made productions about environmental themes like water. My city, Bilbo, has been ranked the most sustainable city in Spain in the well-regarded GDS (Global Destination Sustainability) index.

But from an artistic perspective, I just like re-using things. I've worked in many large theatres in Spain, in the United States, and it's creatively enriching to go into the warehouses and look for items that have already been used and put them in your shows. They always have a life, their own energy, and the process can be creative – extremely creative. It turns out that this is called working sustainably.

**ETC: Do you have any advice to other Artistic Directors that are considering making a sustainable production with the ETC Theatre Green Book?**

**Calixto Bieito:** It's a bit uncomfortable to sit here and give advice, as every artist needs to feel free when they work. But I would say: just try things out. Start with your artistic freedom and see if sustainability can work. In general, I think we overcomplicate things. I think it is possible to make a truly sustainable performance -- it just depends on willpower.

I also didn't make ORGIA sustainable on my own. Irene, our Production Manager, and the entire artistic team cares a lot about sustainability. The Board cares about it. As I mentioned, my city, and also the mayor, are proud of their record on sustainability. And of course, the ETC Theatre Green Book was essential in guiding us.

**ETC: Will you continue making your productions sustainable in the future?**

**Calixto Bieito:** Yes, we'll take this spirit into future productions. We don't really have any other choice. We have to think about future generations – that is what sustainability means, after all: thinking about the generations that come after us.

I don't believe in my posterity. I believe in legacy. If you can leave things better for the people who come after you, then all the better. We collectively face a series of environmental challenges that will affect us dramatically, and it's important to find a solution.

**ETC: Have you started work on the other elements of the ETC Theatre Green Book, on buildings and operations?**

**Calixto Bieito:** We've started working on this, yes. Everything in the ETC Theatre Green Book is going to be taken into account. It's a different challenge to working on productions, but it's exciting. Having different creative challenges is always a good thing for an artist.

*Interview with Calixto Bieito, Artistic Director at Teatro Arriaga/Spain*

## Deutsches Theater, Berlin



From 'Identitti'  
by Deutsches Theater Berlin  
© Thomas Aurin

### Prototyping Sustainable Productions

The DT is one of the largest and most well-known theatres in Germany. This season (2023/2024), we're premiering 29 productions across our three stages, for a total of over 700 performances per season.

So when we work with theatre-makers (directors, set, costume and light designers...), we are aware that it might represent a big opportunity, particularly for those who come to us for the first time. They naturally want to let their imagination flow and make a lasting impression, and to build sets, create costumes and use lighting or video set-ups that may not have been possible in other contexts.

But committing to a sustainable approach to theatre-making requires thinking differently about our production processes. And when it comes down to it, one of the requirements is to use fewer new resources, and instead reuse existing resources.

### First step: Analysis

We started by using the ETC TGB production calculator to analyse the productions that have premiered on our smallest stage BOX this season. We wanted to see what kind of environmental impact we were already having before we planned to add new rules or set new objectives for future productions.

Of the six productions analysed in this first step, we've found that four reached 'Basic' or even 'Intermediate' level. This means, among other criteria, that at least 50% of everything one can find on stage, from set to costumes to props, had been either reused or recycled, and up to 70% was to be stored or used again afterwards.

We had to invest some time and effort to adapt the calculator provided with the ETC TGB (finding all needed information about the used material, for instance) before starting this analysis process, but the good news is that you only have to do this work once. You then have an easy calculator that you can apply to all of your productions.

### See The ETC Theatre Green Book Production Calculator And Standards:

<https://www.europeantheatre.eu/page/resources/etc-tgb/etc-theatre-green-book/productions>

### Working with artists

After the analysis, we started to think about how to apply the standards to our upcoming shows. Could we include the requirements for basic standard in our contracts with artists? How would they react? Would an artistic impact be noticeable for the productions made to this standard?

One of the challenges has also been our production rhythm, which can make it difficult to embed sustainability in our daily work, even if everyone is on board with the general concept.

So we have decided to trial this out next season, 2024/25, for all productions in the BOX. Sustainable production requirements have been mentioned from the very first conversations with the artistic teams and will be included in our contracts.

We're starting with the smallest stage to take the time to build up the personal relationships with the artists, theatre-makers and technicians



involved and to address their concerns, whether they already embrace sustainability in its entirety, or whether more convincing work might be necessary.

We then plan to progressively expand to our two other stages, the KAMMER and the DT BÜHNE.

### **Bonus: Buildings and Operations**

During the ETC TGB process, we also analysed our building and our operations. Thanks to recent renovations, we have either already reached basic standard for buildings and reach basic for operations possibly by summer 2024.

This was good to realise – we are already further ahead than expected, and we can now address the bigger, longer-term structural changes.

### **Overall reflections**

All in all, the ETC TGB basic standard is an achievable first goal. The ETC TGB offers a great instrument to analyse the status quo and raise awareness within the organisation, then set a foundation to work with. Getting started the calculators is a bit of work -- but it does set you up for using everything in the future.

### **A suggestion for the future**

There's a lot of changes that we would like to make, such as having an ozone cabinet and ozone laundry in the costume department, but this represents a larger investment that needs more time for implementation. This is the kind of question for which the ETC TGB network could represent a real benefit, for instance by highlighting relevant national or European funds that we could all apply for.

*By Johann Otten, Dramaturg, and Julia Plickat, Artistic Production Management, at Deutsches Theater Berlin/Germany*

## **Narodni Divadlo, Prague**



From 'One More Minute' by  
Národní divadlo – National  
Theatre Prague © Petr Neubert

### **The ETC TGB Can Help You Motivate Colleagues to Change**

The National Theatre of Prague is big. Very big. It's four huge venues, all of which are historically protected. There are more than 1000 staff. And as with most publicly funded theatres, we rely on the government for additional funding to make any changes, and those processes require patience. On top of this, alongside my artistic partner Lukáš Trpišovský, I am the Artistic Director of the drama department, but we have separate directors for Ballet and Opera.

It's therefore very complicated to even start to think about sustainability. We often need third parties to help us take big steps forwards.

### **Inspiration is key**

We are lucky that we have had help before. In the early 2000s, our technical director started monitoring all the energy used on site and found out a way to transfer the heat from the audience to elsewhere across the building. He fought for wide-ranging infrastructure changes, which have continued with

actions like putting solar panels across the rooves. This is just a small part of the solution but is a challenge in a historic building.

We learned how important it is to inspire people if you want them to change. It's rare to receive the answer "yes, go ahead." There are always questions, concerns that the activities will take money away from something more important... You just have to keep going and working.

### **ETC TGB is the inspiration**

When we started with the ETC Theatre Green Book (ETC TGB), we knew we wanted to make more changes to productions and operations. But we knew we would have to inspire everyone around us from the bottom up – including colleagues in ballet, opera, and workshops.

The ETC TGB itself has become our third-party source of inspiration. It gives you the structure. Normally you would be afraid of where to start, and it gives you the little points for productions or operations and then you can focus on the bigger projects. It makes you think about the things you would never normally consider.

It's been an intense year, but I can say that it's now working. We have established a green committee for the whole theatre, and we're discussing sustainability across the theatre as a whole. Because of our previous work, the buildings are at 'Intermediate' level in the ETC TGB.

So our major advice would be: don't be scared. There's always something you can do. There are many people in your organisation who want to be involved in doing things greener. Find someone who is very enthusiastic and who can inspire people, and work with them and this sustainable tool. When people in your theatre start to find out that sustainable transformation is possible, they start to be proud too.

### **Vision for 2030**

It's hard to be truly confident that we can fulfil everything by 2030. But we already do some things that are great and can be proud of. I also think it's not just the act of reaching the 2030 date that is important – it is important to try.

*By Martin Kukučka, Co-Artistic Director, Drama at Národní divadlo - National Theatre Prague/Czech Republic*

## **Norske Teatret, Oslo**



From 'EinQuan'  
by Det Norske Teatret  
© Monica Tormassay

### **Just Start Making Sustainable Productions. You'll Learn as You Go**

As part of the ETC Theatre Green Book (ETC TGB) Focus Group, we agreed to make one production sustainable up to 'Basic' level. At Det Norske Teatret we chose a production by our incoming Artistic Director, so that she would get knowledge of what the process means and working to the ETC TGB standards.

We didn't necessarily choose the easiest or most suitable production. The team uses a lot of plastic and consumables, and there can be spillage of mud, paint, blood etc – which is normally not that good for the ETC TGB, because it's a lot of buy and throw away. We thought that it might not turn out perfectly, but we figured this was the point – we'd learn a lot from a real-life example, rather than only applying the logic to selected productions that we knew would 'succeed'.

### **Our Approach**

Following this logic, 'Basic' is a goal for our productions. We don't yet demand our artistic teams reach it.



We've found that there are certain things we need to do in the theatre to give teams a sufficient chance to meet the new standards. When we tell them about the sustainable ambitions, the artistic teams will reply, 'Great – but where is the list of what you've got in storage? Where's the inventory?' At the moment, for the big productions, we don't have the time or resources or people to give artists the creative freedom that they need. If we're going to ask artists to give, we need to give as well.

We also need to work closely with creative teams in developing the concept. We need to implement ETC TGB thinking at all points: a checklist to make sure we put the relevant ETC TGB steps in our production meetings. We're going to make a new handbook for our production processes, new agendas for our milestone meetings, and we can add green book thinking in here too.

### **Differences in style and form**

Det Norske Teatret is a repertory theatre, and often we don't know when a production will finish – they could technically have unlimited playing time. It can be a challenge to offer a piece of the set or costume from one of these productions to 're-use'.

In addition, we need to factor in extra time on the set and scenography. If you're going to re-use things, you need to factor in time for deconstruction and re-construction. It's much easier and quicker to just chop something up and throw it away. This is partly a reflection of our system: we only have one stage crew, so if there are performances on the main stage, our crew is working on these. Which also means: where do we find the time for deconstructing the set, if there's a premiere the week afterwards?

### **Pilot production**

On the production we're doing now, we're not that far off 'Basic': 42% of everything is sourced from recycled or re-used materials, and 61% is going to be recycled afterwards. As the production has not premiered yet, it will be interesting to see where we end up versus where we thought we would end up. We bought some things that will not be used after all, that we'll save and hopefully make use of in a later production. We have also calculated for a lot of consumables which are currently not in use, and if it stays that way our TGB results will improve.

### **Basic as a production requirement?**

It has not been difficult to open conversations on sustainability with artists.

It's not a shock for them to hear that we're working with sustainable practices and goals. The feedback is that this thinking is everywhere around them, and they accept that this is the way theatre is going. But it's our job to keep reminding them of the requirements of sustainability during the process, as the artistic needs start to surpass the sustainability thinking. We introduce the ETC TGB at the parameters meeting, but we need to improve on including it as a heading in all milestone meetings and in the feedback to the teams each time we assess their ideas in the production process.

If we make 'Basic' in the ETC TGB a requirement for our productions, we will need to treat it like the budget: something to be respected. Right now, working with ETC TGB as more of a guide than a 'sustainability budget', it's difficult for us to say to an artist: 'No, you can't use these extra consumables, because it will no longer be a sustainable production.' But if we present the artistic teams with the 'Basic'-level requirements as something they are obliged to deliver, like the budget, conditions for storage, technical conditions etc, we can flip the discussion around. We can focus on fulfilling the sustainable requirements, and if we allow something to be added in, we can offer this as a positive.

Implementing changes at a large theatre like Det Norske Teatret always takes a lot of time. So our approach is just to jump in. We think: "Let's do this! We'll fail on lots of productions, succeed on some, but it's much better that we do this than we don't."

*By Tine Lund, Senior Producer at Det Norske Teatret/Norway*



From 'Das Spiel von Liebe und Zufall' by Staatsschauspiel Dresden © Sebastian Hoppe

### The ETC TGB Community Can Save You Time and Money

The ETC Theatre Green Book (ETC TGB) was not our first step into sustainable working. In Autumn 2019, a 'Sustainability Working Group' was set up at our theatre on the initiative of interested employees. At the beginning of 2020, the 'Sustainability Steering Group' began its work, comprised of senior management, department heads, and representatives from HR, accounting, legal, and IT.

A sustainability mission statement for the theatre, based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, was developed in a cooperation project with the Hamburg University of Music and Theatre. To make the topic of sustainability tangible, workshops for employees from all departments were offered workshops over a period of six months from October 2021. Measures were jointly developed and bundled in the form of a sustainability concept.

Finally, the Staatsschauspiel was one of 19 institutions in Germany to take part in the Federal Cultural Foundation's pilot project 'Climate Balance Sheets in Cultural Institutions.' It turns out that a large share of the emissions (around 22%) come from audience travel. Other elements are important too, such as energy use and procurement.

As a result of this, we decided to work with public transport companies in our city, Dresden, and support audiences to travel more sustainably to see us. The following season, the cost of travel on public transport was included in the ticket prices for our theatre.

This was what the ETC TGB would call an 'easy win'. It was something we were able to do relatively easily that has a great benefit for audiences, and our public profile as a sustainable theatre. We enjoyed a lot of coverage about the initiative which also energised our staff.

### The power of the ETC TGB Focus Group

After these experiences, we started to work with ETC and Renew Culture on the first steps for the ETC Theatre Green Book. Following our work with audience travel, which comes under the bracket of 'operations', we joined the ETC TGB Focus Group to see if we could move forward on the two other key strands: Productions and Buildings.

So far we have been able to recognize that we have almost reached 'Basic' in the field of sustainable buildings, and we just finished our first sustainable production.

**But the most important learning has been that we no longer need to contract companies that cost at least 20.000, or up to 40.000 EUR to accompany our theatre across a whole year and track our sustainable impact.** Renew Culture and the ETC TGB make this clear: you can spend lots of money on all sorts of complex calculations, and the result will always be that you need to use less. Any study will tell you that the most effective thing you can do to your building is insulate it properly, with productions you should re-use materials on stage, and you should sort your waste properly, use less paper, and travel sustainably where possible.

The ETC TGB cuts out this middle step. The calculators and survey tools use measurements that are easy for anyone in your organisation to use. All of the tools have been designed in conversation with so many theatres around

the world – particularly now in Europe, where we have all been testing this through the ETC TGB Focus Group – that all of the thinking has been done for you and is presented in an easy-to-use way.

### **A rabbit facing a snake**

In Germany, we have a saying that when you are scared and don't know how to move, you are like a rabbit facing a snake. It's difficult to know how to start, what the right next step is.

What we forget is that in between that moment and a solution is just starting. For us it's working very well to use the ETC Theatre Green Book to reach the next step, I think. And it's very helpful to have colleagues who are moving along with this experience in the same way. With them we can be connected and be in constant dialogue. I think this is helpful and has pushed us to get moving.

*By Joachim Klement, Artistic Director at Staatsschauspiel Dresden/Germany*

## **Théâtre de Liège**



From 'Juste le fin du monde'  
by Théâtre de Liège  
© Annah Schaeffer

### **How the ETC TGB is Improving the Sustainability of Our Theatre Building**

The Théâtre de Liège is made up of two distinct buildings, both owned by the city. The first, in the heart of the city, houses two auditoriums (557 and 145 seats respectively), a rehearsal room, and a costume workshop. The second includes set construction workshops, storage facilities, and an additional rehearsal space.

We meet with city officials twice a year to discuss the state of these buildings and any necessary changes. These are often to do with wear and tear, or fire safety. Recently, we had begun discussing sustainable changes: for instance, we planned to put a plant area on the terraces and needed city officials to test the weight and safety of the structure.

I soon realised that rather than coming to these meetings with one sustainable point after another, it would be more efficient to create an entire sustainable building plan. The good news is that there was an easy answer that meant I didn't need to be an expert: The sustainable building tool in the ETC Theatre Green Book.

### **A simple process**

We organised a general meeting with city officials and the city architect to check the sustainable building tool line-by-line. They were equally happy to have something concrete to follow, which allowed for an exhaustive assessment of the current state and discussion of the challenges and opportunities associated with the buildings. We were also able to tailor the discussion to the specific needs of each site.

Overall, the ETC Theatre Green Book helped us identify a list of 21 relevant actions which must now be budgeted. Among these actions are:

- » Installing sub-meters for electricity to target energy consumption
- » Installing solar panels on the roof
- » Installing daylight sensors, in addition to existing motion detectors, to turn off lights when not needed
- » Installing flow restrictors on faucets
- » Training an employee in heating management tools
- » Installing an airlock at the theatre entrance to prevent drafts
- » Installing UV filters in the small auditorium to protect from heat in summer

There are some things we won't be able to do because it is a historic building. Also, we renovated the building not too long ago, and most of the equipment is considered almost new, making it not sustainable to replace them already. But it's clear that our ecological interests intertwine with the economic interests of the city (the city pays for the electricity and water that we use), and that we have a strong relationship to work on sustainability together.

### **Reaching 'Basic' – and beyond – in the ETC Theatre Green Book**

Our theatre had already made good advances on sustainability in the building. We had begun rationalizing energy consumption (electricity, gas, water) and our energy efficiency was in a good state. A water softener has been installed, allowing everyone to drink directly from taps, eliminating the need for water fountains and plastic bottles. Lighting schedules in the building have been adjusted according to public needs to reduce unnecessary consumption and nocturnal visual pollution.

In addition, motion sensors were installed in the corridors to activate lighting only when necessary, and half of the non-essential neon lights in the corridors were removed. Heating in all spaces has been limited to 19 degrees

Celsius. Lastly, terraces were greened with the help of the Liège horticultural school, planting edible plants for staff and beneficial plants for pollinators.

Thus, the 5 “easy wins” necessary to reach the Basic level established by the ETC Theatre Green Book had already been achieved prior to utilizing the tool. But the ETC TGB is helping us to reach the important next step. It has been praised by both the city and the theatre for its ability to simplify the development of a comprehensive action plan, offering a diverse range of concrete actions while eliminating those not suitable for the institution's specific characteristics. We now have a plan – the next step will be implementing this.

*By Emmanuelle Lejeune, Sustainability Advisor at Théâtre de Liège/Belgium*





From 'Rijnreisje'  
by De Toneelmakerij  
© Sanne Peper

### Embedding Sustainable Policies Across Your Organisation

Compared to the other theatres that took part in the ETC Theatre Green Book (ETC TGB) Focus Group – mostly large, national theatres - we are quite small. We're a touring theatre company, based in Amsterdam. And after a year with the ETC TGB we're still at the beginning of this journey.

But we can say the ETC TGB has been very useful in giving us structure to address sustainability in a broader way for our company. All our staff, much like everybody reading this, cares about the environment. But it's a different process to embed sustainable thinking across your whole organisation, and make sure that sustainability is part of your artistic practice and decisions.

We've taken the first steps by committing to the Preliminary commitments. These are:

- » COMMIT to reducing your environmental impact and starting the transition to net zero.

- » Establish a GREEN COMMITTEE including the sustainability lead, a member of the senior leadership team, and a lead for each area - Productions, Operations and Buildings – and key staff members.
- » Agree an ACTION PLAN setting out the steps you need to reach the next Green Book stage, and a timescale to achieve it.

One of the most important elements for us was to form a green committee. This has moved away the responsibility for becoming sustainable from one person to the whole company. We are also making plans about measuring data, and how we will communicate everything to partners and audience and staff. For us, the ETC Theatre Green Book is mostly a way to get started and create awareness.

### Building

Our office is located in a historic building, on one of the Amsterdam canals. We are not the owners but rent the building, and since it is a historic building it's quite difficult to make changes. But in the areas we can influence decisions, we do so: we change to LED lights as much as we can, and we try to be very conscious about using heaters for example. Also, since we are a touring company and perform 90% of our work in other buildings, we don't have control over the venues we work in.

### Operations

As said, we are a small organization, and we are still developing the policy around sustainability. We just delivered the 4-year plan for our subsidies, which will start in January 2025, so for us this will be the actual start of a new way of producing: producing in a sustainable way. We are certainly committed to making the change.

### Productions

Since last year, we have made 2 productions using the principles of the ETC TGB. These are 'Science Fiction', a classroom performance, and 'Rijnreisje', a performance that was touring in theatres in the Netherlands. For both productions, we wanted to analyse where we stand on sustainability and learn from the ETC TGB.

Overall, 'Science Fiction' was a very successful production in terms of sustainability. Before we started the rehearsal period for this project, the artistic team agreed that we would make sustainable choices. So for example when we 'needed' to order different costumes, instead of ordering them

online from a same-day-delivery fast fashion store, instead not to do so, and instead use existing costumes from our storage. Some other green examples:

- » We toured with an electric van
- » All the food we consumed was vegan, and locally produced as much as possible
- » The costumes were almost 80% reused and recycled
- » The props and scenery were almost all second-hand and made from existing materials
- » The actors and the artistic team choose to only travel by bike and train to rehearsals

Because we agreed ourselves in the beginning that we would be led by sustainable choices, we could look back on this promise and ask ourselves if we were practicing what we were preaching... It was very helpful and inspiring to work consciously with ETC TGB in mind. We filled out the production calculator, and the results for 'Science Fiction' were: source 86% reused/recycled, destination 98% reused/recycled. We can say this was the greenest production we ever made – an ADVANCED production, according to the ETC TGB classifications!

Next up was 'Rijnreisje', a production that toured in small/medium venues. For this production it was a bit more challenging to produce it sustainably. The materials for the set and costumes that we chose were quite sustainable. For example, the set & scenery was fully made of cardboard, and we chose the most sustainable cardboard possible. But the problem, we learned afterwards, was that it was not re-usable... The production calculator showed us the following results: source 71% reused/recycled, destination 54% reused/recycled.

In general, I can say we are (slowly) shifting to a new – sustainable – way of producing, and we still need to learn a lot, but progress is being made!

*By Sanne Liebrechts, Producer at De Toneelmakerij/The Netherlands*

## Young Vic, London



From 'The Homecoming'  
by Young Vic  
© Manuel Harlan

### How to Make Sustainable Productions Without Storage Space

The Young Vic is a mid-scale theatre in the heart of London. We have a main stage with 420 seats, one studio space for 150 people, and another space that sits 70.

We started working with the Theatre Green Book (TGB) in January 2023. After six months of testing and trials, we made our first big in-house show to sustainable standards, Beneatha's Place. We were aiming for 'Basic', but in the end the production scored 'Intermediate'. We now make all our shows to at least Basic level.

#### The challenge

There is a complication for our theatre: unlike many colleagues around Europe, we don't have an in-house storage space for sets. According to the ETC Theatre Green Book, for shows to be classed as baseline, 50% of everything on stage must be reused or recycled, and 65% must be stored or used again afterwards.

### **A change in design principles**

The first solution is to re-use materials on stage in upcoming shows. We usually do five shows each year in the main house. As there is not enough time to dismantle a show and use the materials in the next, we try and use as much as possible of what is in 'Show 1' in 'Show 3'. And we use the same principle for 'Show 2' and 'Show 4'.

Back in the day, all the scenery would be painted and filled, and all our screw heads painted over, and nothing could be reused. Now a lot our work is huge flats of timber that we can reuse. We're looking at new techniques, working with sustainable builders and being clever with paint finishes. We're now at the point where we might not build something for a show if we don't think it's reusable.

The Green Book has really put the 'creative' back in 'creative industries'. We can't just go and buy a solution off the shelf and fix something, like we used to before. We have to sit down with the designers and figure something out instead.

### **Sharing materials through Facebook Groups**

Everything we don't use again needs another home. One of the biggest resources is Set Exchange. What we do is upload photos of the materials, press photos from a performance, and say 'you've got 6 weeks, who wants this?' All of these conversations are happening much earlier now than they used to.

We were initially worried about one production, The Homecoming, because the materials were painted to give them an old effect. And I was thinking, this is all so heavy, it's been painted to look a certain way, no-one is going to take this.... But in the end, the furniture went to a Theatre in Education (TIE) company doing performances in schools, and we also managed to give a huge carpet to a commercial company for a 'chillout space' in an office block. There are more and more industrial companies joining these sites, offering and taking materials.

So the creation of that show wasn't looking great from a sustainable point of view, but when it came to the end of the production, we were able to 'catch up' and make Basic by finding a home for all the materials.

### **Partner with local theatres and artists...**

Luckily, the set designers we work with often also collaborate with other theatres in London, so they're thinking in a sustainable way across their own shows. Often, they'll say: "I've got this piece which is currently in a show at the Royal Court Theatre (another similar-sized venue in London), and I can use this for the design in your show." That's a lovely change in the space of one year, and even set design companies are starting to try out new sustainable materials and show them off to us.

We also work with large organisations like the English National Opera and the Royal Opera House, as they have a lot of storage space. We've got stuff there and we let them use it, and vice versa. Our costume store is quite large, but we don't hire these out: we lend them out on the proviso that we get that storage in return.

### **...but remember your theatre is unique**

When we started, we tried to apply the ETC TGB to productions like risk management or health and safety guidelines. That didn't work. As Renew Culture has made clear, our theatre is very different to other theatres in London, or across Europe. We're a venue with a workshop on site. Others aren't. We've got multiple venues, so we can do things in the main house and then put them in the studio. But we have no set storage.

In the end, the ETC TGB is a document to start with. You have to build your own processes and find your own way. The most important thing is to keep filling it out. When we're costing up a show, we're filling it out, and going, 'Okay, it's not going to hit the ETC Theatre Green Book. Do we want to redo now?'

### **Remember what you CAN do**

In Summer 2022, lots of us went to the National Theatre in London for a big conference on sustainability. We came away a bit despondent, thinking 'theatres of our size can't do that.' But as soon as theatres like The Young Vic did start implementing the TGB, there was this sudden shift in mind-set. We've now got this whole network, and it went from slowly taking off to absolutely skyrocketing.

It's important to focus on what you have done, not what you haven't. Two years ago none of us were doing any of this work in this way. Even if you're hitting close to baseline all year round, but not actually reaching it, that's so



much better than not even trying. We know a lot of theatres that are doing that, and it'd be a shame for them to not carry on because they're not getting a certain level of certification in the ETC TGB.

### **Everyone cares about sustainability**

The final thing we'd say is that audiences and staff really care. They like noticing when a part of the set was used in a different production. Renew Culture are good at reminding us that audiences think that we should be working sustainably, so we owe it to them. We can put more effort into broadcasting what we are achieving publicly.

And for our technical team, they're really into this. This work has given them a big seat at the table to say: 'I know how we could achieve these sustainable goals the organisation has.' Everything is less competitive, more collaborative now. We hope it lasts.

*By Craig Tye, Technical Director, and Lucy Davies, Executive Director at the Young Vic/UK*

## **Het Zuidlijk Toneel, Tilburg**



From 'Shut Up and Play With Me' by Het Zuidelijk Toneel  
© Sofie Knijff

### **Our 'Howcha Dowcha'\* Approach to Sustainable Theatre**

Our story with the ETC Theatre Green Book (ETC TGB) started with freedom. As my theatre is a touring company, I didn't want to be limited by props or money in our productions. I started thinking about how to get around these requirements, which, it turns out, is a very 'green' thing to do.

So we decided that for one year, all our theatre makers would work without props and set designs. "This is impossible," they said, "I'm somebody who works with sets, it's impossible." But it did work – artists generally have a lot of self-belief. The year after, we decided to make one set design that could be shared with four directors. We started encouraging the audience to put on an extra sweater, instead of extra heating in the auditorium, and to take the train with our actors, instead of being lonely in their cars.

#### **'Howcha Dowcha' solutions**

I call these actions 'howcha dowcha' solutions -- things which are not expensive, or fancy, but always fun.



Using the ETC TGB has been a genuinely exciting experience, and it feels a bit like a game. You improve, get better, get inspired by colleagues. There are challenges, but the good thing is that the ETC TGB doesn't focus on just one thing to solve, which might require the city to intervene. You can shift towards areas in which you have much more influence.

Working this way has also led to some quite interesting artistic talks. In one production we realised there was a lot of fake blood, which is a terribly polluting product, and gets the set and the costumes dirty. We asked ourselves if we could cut it out for sustainable reasons, and then we asked why we even needed to have blood that looked real - the audience knows it isn't real.

I think that as long as the artistic part isn't convinced that sustainability is their business as well, this whole thing is hopeless. So you have to work together.

### **Connecting to others with the ETC TGB**

I was honestly a bit sceptical towards the ETC TGB at first – people always come with other suggestions or ways of measuring your climate impact.

But that's difficult, because one person is playing Scrabble and the other is playing Monopoly, and you can't join the game together. The ETC TGB covers every sustainable topic and it gives the possibility to have a conversation about sustainability with a completely different sort of organisation – whether repertoire, touring, national level, regional... You realise that the goals we have are common. It's about the planet.

The ETC TGB makes sustainable theatre accessible for everyone in my company, colleagues in other colleagues, and the ETC. It's a really good tool.

### **Vision to 2030**

Will Het Zuidelijk Toneel reach 'Advanced' level by 2030? I don't know if I'm confident, but I know the team has become obsessed with this goal. And until now I didn't bump into things that kept me back. Like in a race, your tire gets flat, it takes time to repair. But I think we will manage.

And I hope that the moment we reach the goal, we realise there are other buttons to push and keep going further.

\* howcha dowcha is a phonetic translation of the term "houtje-touwtje," which refers to a simple solution to a problem. It implies that the solution is not very robust or sophisticated, but sufficient to address the issue. The image of a "houtje" (a piece of wood) and "touwtje" (a piece of string) suggests that simple, readily available, and inexpensive materials are being used. I hope "howcha dowcha" gets adopted into the jargon.

*By Sarah Moeremans, Artistic Director of Het Zuidelijk Toneel/The Netherlands*

# Challenges identified

## Sharing problems

While the experience of using the ETC Theatre Green Book has been overwhelmingly positive, it is also essential to be open and honest about the very real challenges theatre-makers face in the transition to net zero. Identifying these challenges will help focus energy in the cultural, infrastructural or policy changes needed to help theatre become sustainable.

The following are challenges which have repeatedly been raised in discussions with the focus group.

## Time

The ETC Theatre Green Book stresses the need for more time in achieving sustainable outcomes for theatre productions. Extra creative thinking time is needed to develop sustainable ideas. Time is needed for the collaborative discussions that will take a creative idea and workshop it to a more sustainable outcome. Time is needed for sustainable disposal of materials which might previously have been thrown away. Finally, time is needed because many of these processes and ways of thinking are new and unfamiliar to teams.

However, theatres have reported that they can find it challenging to make more time in crowded calendars, and to find extra staff and freelancer time to devote to sustainable working.

## The creative challenge

Creativity is one of theatre's great strengths in the transition to net zero. Theatre is inherently creative. It welcomes change. New creative thinking will ultimately shift climate considerations from seemingly restrictive, to being accepted parameters that can provide a spur for creativity.

However, for established artists in particular, who have developed successful creative habits over time, the need to think differently is, of course, a challenge. For designers, it can seem counter-intuitive to do less, not more. The support of the whole production team is needed to avoid any loss of the ambition on which theatre thrives. It will take time to learn how ambitious ideas can still be realised in ways that avoid harming the planet.

## Touring

Touring is essential to theatre. Through touring, ideas are shared, and theatre can be brought to communities with no other access to the art form.

However, the lack of sustainable freight options, and the limitations of the rail network in many parts of Europe, mean that net zero touring is currently hard to achieve. Over time, sustainable transport options will inevitably become available. Until then, the ETC Theatre Green Book provides guidance to keep theatre touring in the most sustainable possible way.

## Storage

Shifting theatre from a linear to a circular economy means a massive increase in reuse and recycling. The basic standards of the ETC Theatre Green Book require even Basic productions to reuse / recycle 50% of sets, scenery, props and costumes.

Theatres are showing great ingenuity in achieving this. However, the relative lack of infrastructure for storage in many countries is a significant brake on progress. Shared storage schemes, and increased storage capacity will greatly facilitate the transition to net zero. Even where physical storage is available, improvement is needed in asset management and sharing software, to enable creative teams to search and reuse resources.

## Buildings

The single greatest barrier on the road to sustainable theatre is the challenge of making Europe's theatre buildings fit for purpose in the context of the climate emergency.

This is not for lack of expertise. The solutions are well understood, and set out clearly in the ETC Theatre Green Book. However, the cost of upgrading buildings to make them net zero is potentially high (UK research suggest a figure of approximately 10m Euros for an average theatre). Many European theatres are owned and managed by local authorities who will need to find significant funds if this hurdle is to be overcome.

Significant progress can be made in reducing energy use without major investment – and reduced energy costs will, over time, pay back the investment costs (Národní divadlo – National Theatre Prague/Czech Republic, one of the ETC Theatre Green Book focus group theatres, is a prime example of

this positive thinking). However, energy and funding from authorities will be needed to cashflow change, if theatre's 2030 target is to be met.

## **Heritage**

A related challenge is the difficulty of making change to heritage buildings – and many European theatres are also heritage assets.

It is important to balance priorities in decision-making. The value of our heritage assets is such that they, too, represent a priority to be safeguarded for the future. Compromise will be needed in making historic buildings more sustainable. Most will only achieve net zero when national energy networks are sufficiently decarbonised to power relatively inefficient buildings.

However, a change in the attitude of heritage authorities is also needed to help arrive at a more sympathetic compromise that continues to protect historic buildings, but recognises the unprecedented severity of the climate crisis.

## The Pathway to 2030

## Timeline to 2030

### The Challenge

Theatre has an impressive power to lead conversations, share messages, and drive a wider social conversation. But theatre can only lead that conversation if we learn to make our own work without harming the planet. If we aspire to reach that goal by 2030, then there remain only six years in which to achieve a wholesale transition in every aspect of theatre-making.

While this seems daunting, there are good reasons for optimism:

- » The Theatre Green Book initiative has already gained momentum and critical mass in changing theatre, and now has networks across the continent (and beyond). With the ETC Theatre Green Book providing connection and further reach, we can say that theatre has given itself a common language, shared approach, proven tools and effective networks with which to achieve the transition.
- » By providing shape and definition to the transition, through its systematic coverage of Productions, Operations and Buildings, and its measurable structure of three standards (Basic, Intermediate and Advanced), the ETC Theatre Green Book enables us – for the first time – to map out a credible path for European theatre to net zero by the end of 2030.

The reward of this approach is obvious. Theatre's methodology for change is evidently transferable to other sectors. Guidance for Buildings and Operations may differ relatively little between sectors, while guidance for making work (for example, museum exhibitions) could quite easily be developed within each sector. **Using the ETC Theatre Green Book as a template, it is possible to offer culture across Europe a co-ordinated, effective and measurable shared approach to making culture sustainable.**

### The Timeline

The attached timeline for transition was presented to the European Commission in autumn 2023. It indicates how European theatre can credibly achieve net zero by the end of 2030. Thanks to the structured approach of the ETC Theatre Green Book, this is not a vague claim or declaration, but a systematic programme for which we already have the tools in place.

The first step of this programme will be completed at the end of June 2024. At that point, we will have launched:

- » The ETC Theatre Green Book

- » Second editions of the Theatre Green Books in Germany and the UK.
- » New Theatre Green Books in Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Denmark.
- » Linked Theatre Green Book networks across Europe.

Preparation of these tools is not an end in itself, however. The purpose of the programme lies in leveraging change across theatre. To do this requires:

- » Using theatre's networks
- » Support and learning
- » Self-certification
- » Measuring results

## Using theatre's networks

### The European Theatre Convention

As the largest network of publicly funded theatres in Europe, the ETC is uniquely positioned to spearhead the transition of European theatre.

The focus group that created the ETC Theatre Green Book is an effective example of collaboration uniting theatres across Europe, working at different scales, and using different production approaches, and yet pooling expertise to benefit from a common language for sustainability, and a common approach in tackling shared challenges. Their transition to 'Basic' standard has been easier thanks to shared working and the structured approach of the ETC Theatre Green Book. At the same time, the Theatre Green Book has proved itself flexible enough to accommodate widely varying types of theatre practice.

The process of working with the focus group has provided useful lessons:

- » Individual sustainability champions are key to driving change, but engagement is needed at every level (artistic leadership; production and technical staff; operations team) to deliver progress across an organisation and make the transition.
- » One to one support and site visits are an important tool in boosting confidence, widening engagement, identifying next steps and motivating change.
- » The model of a triallers network is very successful in building confidence and expertise, and provides a model for further development of expertise.
- » There is some evidence of 'macro-blockers' (for example, Intellectual Property, the challenge of heritage building legislation, and local transport infrastructure).
- » The pace of change is fast, with growing knowledge of new solutions and materials, currently being spread through informal contacts. ETC has a role in developing peer-to-peer networks and acting as a resource bank for case studies and toolkits.

Using this knowledge, the ETC is already able to envision how further change can be accelerated. By September 2025, the original focus group of nine theatres will each 'mentor' two more ETC member theatres. A second focus group of nine theatres will also be convened, with the result that by September 2025, half of the ETC membership will have been trained in use of the ETC Theatre Green Book, and will be at, or near, Basic standard.

Between September 2025 and September 2026, each theatre will again act as 'mentor' to a new theatre. As a result, every ETC member will have the chance to reach Basic by the end of 2026. By using their network, the European Theatre Convention will be exactly on target with the timeline presented to the European Commission, in line with the Opole Recommendations.

### Other networks

Theatre is well networked, adaptive and open to learning from peers. The linked Theatre Green Book networks are proving an effective way to spread information and best practice across Europe.

Strong networks are one of the theatre sector's greatest assets. They exist both nationally and regionally; and also trans-nationally, through networks like the ETC, and Opera Europa.

By connecting pre-existing networks, the Theatre Green Book is able to forge pathways through which information, ideas and best practice can be transmitted without delay, enabling theatre to move rapidly and effectively towards net zero.

An example is the creation of the Theatre Green Book's 'Production Calculator' by a collaboration of Royal Danish Theatres, Dutch Opera and Ballet, the Royal Opera House, London, the UK National Theatre, National Theatre Scotland, and National Theatre Wales. The heads of productions for each organisation were able to pool their (considerable) expertise, and work through data from their own shows to arrive at a tool that is now freely available for all.

Networks are able to share general and industry-specific information (for example, the development of new, more sustainable construction materials). Peer-to-peer learning across job roles enables expertise in theatre-making (for example, in costume departments, or catering management) to be shared quickly and effectively.

It is through networks that support and learning can be shared to leverage change across European theatre.

## Support and learning

### Case studies

Sustainability is a relatively new challenge for theatre. The learning curve in changing practice and implementing new ideas is challenging. Change can be hard in organisations which are under stress of either time or money – and most theatres suffer both.

Case studies are essential in sharing learning and removing fear. Most challenges that theatre-makers face have been encountered by others before them. Case studies, readily shared through networks online, can quickly answer questions, and give the confidence needed to pursue effective solutions.

The ETC Theatre Green Book will launch with the case studies, included above, of nine theatres' experience in adopting the ETC Theatre Green Book and beginning the transition to sustainable theatre. Detailed case studies will include reports on trial shows, as well as more specific examples of sustainable practice.

An example is Národní divadlo – National Theatre Prague's experience of a major sustainability project for their historic building, which halved energy use while delivering cost savings that effectively paid back the investment.

### Toolkits

The ETC Theatre Green Book provides theatres with clear, practical guidance, and defined standards, based on established sustainability principles. There remains detail, in each specialist aspect of theatre-making, which can only be fleshed out by theatre-makers themselves.

The ETC Theatre Green Book is therefore accompanied by an online toolkit, created by the membership, that shares learnings and experience in an easy-to-digest form.

Examples of toolkit pages are:

- » Standard clauses to use in contracts or riders
- » Technical know-how in sustainable costume-making, or lighting.
- » Alternative products to unsustainable options such as PVC tape or polystyrene.
- » Online resources for asset-sharing or digital management.

The ETC Theatre Green Book toolkit will be curated by members and continually expanded. It will be augmented by theatres' access to national or regional Theatre Green Book networks, whose toolkits may contain local resources, such as sharing facilities, or haulage firms that offer sustainable transport options.

### Peer-to-peer learning

Theatre is a bespoke art-form, where template solutions are rare. Every theatre, and every production is different. Unlike, say, office space, or manufacturing processes, where solutions might be generic, theatres and theatre-makers face challenges which may be smaller in scale, but are often highly complex in nature.

This does not mean that cross-learning is impossible. The ETC Theatre Green Book has provided a shared approach that works for theatre-makers of all kinds. However, it does place a higher premium on peer-to-peer learning, whereby theatre-makers can share experience in sometimes highly specialised fields such as costume-making or scenic construction.

This process is already actively planned across the ETC. Peer-to-peer learning will allow theatre-makers from the first focus group to offer support to the 'second wave' of ETC member theatres.

Theatre-makers no longer need to tackle the challenge of net zero alone. They have access to expertise from across the sector, whatever the nature of their work, and whatever the nature of their enquiry.

## Self-Certification

### Self-certification: principle

If theatre is to transition successfully to sustainable working, we need to measure our success in changing practice. The ETC Green Book therefore includes a certification system that will:

- » Enable theatres to set milestones towards their target date for zero carbon, and measure their progress against those milestones.
- » Enable policy-makers to track theatre's changing practice on a verifiable journey towards zero carbon and sustainable working.

The ETC Theatre Green Book defines three standards, Basic, Intermediate and Advanced, which cover all three areas of theatre's activity: Productions, Buildings and Operations. Each standard, for each area, is clearly defined through specific and verifiable actions. The ETC Theatre Green Book standards therefore offer a clear framework for measuring progress through theatres' changed behaviours across all three areas.

The ETC Green Book will allow theatres to self-certify their progress through these stages.

An initial Preliminary standard will recognise full commitment to sustainability, and the establishment of basic procedures and structures to support the journey. Achieving ETC Basic, Intermediate or Advanced will demonstrate where a theatre has reached on its journey to zero carbon, across the whole range of its activities: productions, building and operations.

For example, for a theatre to be certified at ETC Green Book Basic, it will need to:

- » Make the majority of its productions to Basic standard.
- » Have developed a sustainability plan for its building and carried out the 'Easy Wins' to reduce energy use.
- » Run the majority of its operations to Basic standard.

Equivalent behaviour changes are defined to reach Intermediate and Advanced standards.

Theatres certified as having achieved Basic, Intermediate or Advanced will be at identifiable points on the journey to net zero, based on verifiable actions.

## Self-certification: practice

It would, in theory, be possible to run the ETC Theatre Green Book self-certification system as a 'policed' system that accurately badges a theatre's sustainability progress through examination by a third-party authority.

However:

- » The 'policed' approach seems alien to theatre culture.
- » It may tempt theatres to 'game' the system.
- » It would require watertight standards, whereas the current approach is flexible enough to encourage innovation and experiment.
- » It would be expensive to run.

Nonetheless, there is great value in theatres sharing their progress with audiences and stakeholders in ways that generate momentum and emulation across the sector.

Self-certification is an effective compromise which will make sustainability sufficiently visible to satisfy the public and funders, while remaining light-touch enough for theatre-makers.

As they reach each stage, theatres will fill in simple downloadable forms to demonstrate compliance with each standard. These will need to be signed by the Intendant or Director. The ETC will then issue certificates that theatres can include in their websites and marketing information.

## Measuring results

### Measuring practice

As noted above, the Green Book divides the challenge of sustainable theatre into three distinct areas:

- » Sustainable Productions (making our productions more sustainably)
- » Sustainable Operations (running operations more sustainably)
- » Sustainable Buildings (making our buildings more sustainable)

Across each of these areas, it sets three standards:

- » Basic is a first step, relatively easy for small companies, but achievable even for the largest theatres. A Basic production or building will not seem out of reach to theatre staff, but will already be significantly more sustainable than previous practice.
- » Intermediate is the next step on the road, building on baseline experience to make further progress across the three areas of Productions, Buildings and Operations.
- » Advanced represents net zero theatre, and is the goal of all theatres across Europe.

At present, theatres are at very different stages in relation to sustainability. Some are already far advanced while others have barely begun the journey. The work of small companies, under financial pressure, may already be quite sustainable. Meanwhile, opera houses and theatres working at large scale will find the journey more challenging. The Green Book's three standards enable companies at different scales and stages to follow the same methodology. In turn, that enables the sector as a whole to endorse a single shared approach, opening up learning pathways between theatres of all scales.

The three standards of the ETC Theatre Green Book also provide a long-term roadmap for the journey to sustainability. A theatre that reaches basic will be able to see ahead the further definable steps that will take them to zero carbon.

If we don't change what we do, in definable ways, then we cannot expect to achieve different outcomes. That is why the first step is to measure what we're doing differently, using the ETC Theatre Green Book's three standards.



## Measuring circularity

Having done so, we then need to measure the direct impact of that changed practice on the climate crisis, allowing funders and policy-makers to monitor the sector's progress against wider targets. The ETC Theatre Green Book therefore provides a framework for monitoring both circularity and carbon.

The essential goal of sustainable working is to shift theatre from a linear approach to production (whereby virgin materials are used on stage and then discarded), to a circular model based on reuse and recycling. The essential measurement of a 'green' production is how much of the material on stage is reused and recycled, captured as a percentage of weight.

Circularity can also, quite easily, be captured as a dashboard measurement through general waste and recycling practices.

By monitoring these two indicators, theatres are able to track their progress from linear to circular ways of operating.

## Measuring carbon

Theatres have found it extremely hard to develop accurate and workable methods of calculation for complex operations like making productions. However, the most significant drivers of carbon generation by theatres can be measured accurately and relatively easily:

- » Carbon use in the most important new materials in sets and scenery (steel, aluminium, timber).
- » Travel for deliveries, touring, staff, visitors and audiences.
- » Building energy use.

Together, these typically represent 90% of the carbon impact of theatres and theatre operations, and enable the sector to report to funders and policy-makers on the progress resulting from its changed practice.

The ETC Theatre Green Book provides users with three support tools, a Production calculator, an Operations Tracker, and a Building Survey Tool.

The Production Calculator includes a carbon calculator for new set-building materials, and a Travel Calculator for touring and deliveries.

The Operations Tracker includes a Travel Calculator for business travel and deliveries, as well as a Building Energy Calculator.

All these tools are driven by carbon factors derived in accordance with GHG Protocol by Creative Carbon Scotland. Carbon factors are supplied for different regions of Europe.

Carbon outcomes can be aggregated to deliver an overall footprint for each theatre. This, in turn, will give each theatre a benchmark to allow them to track their progress year-on-year.

## What stands in the way of net zero theatre?

### Macro-blockers

The creation of the ETC Theatre Green Book, involving intensive engagement with a varied group of theatres, has provided unique insight into the challenges standing in the way of progress to net zero. The journey to net zero is a transition which will, of course, involve an infinite number of day-to-day challenges. The purpose of this section, however, is to identify those more structural issues where action might be taken to clear theatre's path to a more sustainable future. Some have already been listed in the section 'Challenges Identified', above.

### Challenges for Sustainable Productions

- » Time was identified by focus group members as a recurrent issue in making productions sustainably. Some theatres are forced by their funding contracts to produce a number of shows each season which leaves no time for innovation or sustainable working. Reducing the amount of work theatres produce would make sustainability easier.
- » Intellectual Property rights can limit how much material from each production is reused or recycled. Modified contracts with designers could remove this barrier while still protecting a designer's right to safeguard specified elements of the design.
- » Sustainable production is easier if set-builders and other makers are involved in early discussions about the concept. This allows them to support the creative team in workshopping an idea to its most sustainable form. This is possible in theatres with their own production facilities, but much harder when set-building is contracted out. Some tendering processes (following EU procurement rules) force theatres to accept lowest-price tenders without regard to achieving sustainability standards.
- » Lack of storage imposes a limit on the amount of material which can be accessed for reuse or recycling. Poor asset management systems make it hard for designers to search even those materials which ought to be available. Increased storage, and improved, networked asset-management systems would greatly expand the circular economy for theatre-making.
- » Sustainable touring remains challenging for theatres. An increase in the infrastructure for electric vehicle recharging, and the availability of larger electric vehicles, would help to address this, as would greater international connectivity in the European rail network.

## Challenges for sustainable operations

- » A transition towards plant-based catering can only be achieved by theatres if societal change makes audiences open to it.
- » An increasing in waste recycling is limited by the facilities offered by waste collectors. This varies widely. More streaming, and more sustainable waste management by local authorities and private contractors would enable theatres to recycle more.
- » Authority-owned buildings are often managed centrally, giving theatres little control over heating, cooling and ventilation controls. That makes it hard for them to pursue all aspects of a sustainable building management policy.
- » Audience transport is not fully under theatres' control, but represents a significant element in their climate impact. Better public transport, and co-ordination with transport timetables, along with better infrastructure for sustainable travel such as bicycles and electric cars, would help theatres support their audiences in making sustainable travel choices.
- » Tender rules may prevent publicly-owned theatres from letting third party supply or service contracts to high sustainability standards. Sustainability would need to be scored equally with cost to ensure the highest ETC Theatre Green Book standards are met.

## Challenges for sustainable buildings

- » The cost of upgrading theatre buildings to make them fit-for-purpose in the climate emergency will require government help.
- » Many theatres are owned by local authorities or central governments, giving theatres themselves little control over them. Collaboration by theatre building owners in planning and executing sustainable refurbishments would enable theatres to shift their buildings towards net zero.
- » Heritage legislation and heritage authorities can make it hard to upgrade historic buildings. Greater collaboration and flexibility would help deliver sustainability upgrades.



### How to overcome the challenges?

Read ETC's **Sustainable Theatre Policy Recommendations** for publicly funded theatres, policy makers and funders at the local, national and European level:

[www.europeantheatre.eu/sustainability](http://www.europeantheatre.eu/sustainability)

## ABOUT THE ETC THEATRE GREEN BOOK

---

The **ETC Theatre Green Book (ETC TGB)** develops the successful Theatre Green Book initiative for a European context. It is a collaboration between the European Theatre Convention (ETC), the largest network of publicly funded theatres in Europe with 63 members in 31 countries, and Renew Culture, the co-founders of the renowned Theatre Green Book. It is a response to the ETC network's ambitious pledge to become a climate-neutral network by 2030.

The **ETC Theatre Green Book is free** to use for any European theatre and includes accessible calculators, survey tools and trackers for theatre professionals to easily measure their sustainable progress. These resources have been refined and tested by a 'Focus Group' of 9 ETC theatres from across Europe, which tested and implemented the ETC Theatre Green Book during the 2023/24 season.

**Throughout the 2024/25 season**, these 9 Focus Group theatres will mentor an additional two ETC theatres during their sustainability journey. ETC will also work with Renew Culture to train a second 'Focus Group' of 9 ETC theatres, which will in turn be able to mentor a cohort of remaining ETC theatres.

You can access the ETC Theatre Green Book on the ETC website.

[www.europeantheatre.eu/etctheatregreenbook](http://www.europeantheatre.eu/etctheatregreenbook)

You can explore the original Theatre Green Book on:

[www.theatregreenbook.com](http://www.theatregreenbook.com)

## ABOUT THE SELF-CERTIFICATION

---

The **ETC Theatre Green Book includes** the first self-certification process for European Theatres. This aims to energise both the public and policy makers about how much progress has been made on sustainability in their organisations. Four classifications are available: Preliminary, Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced (equivalent to net-zero).

**Each level** is claimed by achieving increasingly tight requirements on embedding circularity and lowering carbon footprint, for instance by reusing materials and using less energy, and reaching a requisite threshold across their Productions, Operations and Buildings.

**The approach is designed to be** both realistic and effective, getting over the 'piecemeal' approach to sustainable activity that leads to "progress in one area while ignoring others that may have more impact."

Theatres will be able to use the resulting self-certification on their websites and promotional material to demonstrate the extent of their sustainable progress to audiences and policymakers.



You can access additional news, recordings and resources on the ETC Theatre Green Book journey through the ETC website.

[www.europeantheatre.eu/sustainability](http://www.europeantheatre.eu/sustainability)

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

---

**Paddy Dillon** is the co-founder and director of the Theatre Green Book, an initiative for sustainability in theatre that has transformed the sector and become recognised as a global standard for sustainability. He is known internationally as a leader and advocate for theatre sustainability, and has promoted theatre sustainability across the world, speaking at conferences from Bogota to Bergamo.

From 2015 to 2021 Paddy was trustee of the UK's Theatres Trust, serving as deputy chair and interim chair. He currently chairs ITEAC, the ABTT's international theatre conference, which he has transformed into a global initiative with events across East Asia, Europe and South America.

Paddy is also an award-winning theatre architect, responsible for the regeneration of the National Theatre, in London, alongside many other projects. Paddy is author of nine books, including a children's history of architecture. He is an experienced broadcaster and journalist.

**Lisa Burger** CBE is one of the most respected strategic leaders in the arts. Until spring 2022 she was Joint Chief Executive and Executive Director of the UK's National Theatre, where the key achievements of her career included the development and launch of NT Live to broadcast work from leading UK theatres into cinemas around the world.

During the Covid pandemic, she created NT at Home, a free on-line product which reached a worldwide audience of 10m, and has now developed into a commercial subscriber service. In the course of the pandemic, she was instrumental in helping develop the UK government's support package for the arts.

Lisa co-founded Renew Culture and the Theatre Green Book in 2020. With unparalleled experience of theatre, both in the UK and internationally, she has specialised in resilience, commercial strength and sustainable growth. She is a Trustee of Historic Royal Palaces and of the Royal Opera House and has previously Chaired the Lyric Hammersmith.

Lisa's work in theatre has been recognised with a special Olivier award, a CBE award from the British Government, and an Honorary Doctorate.

Case studies written by representatives of the ETC Theatre Green Book Focus Group #1. These are: **Young Vic** (UK), **Teatro Arriaga** (Spain), **Národní divadlo – National Theatre Prague** (Czech Republic), **Deutsches Theater Berlin** (Germany), **De Toneelmakerij** (The Netherlands), **Staatsschauspiel Dresden** (Germany), **Théâtre de Liège** (Belgium), **Het Zuidelijk Toneel** (The Netherlands), **Det Norske Teatret** (Norway)

## ABOUT THE STUDY

---

The study was produced in collaboration with Renew Culture/UK, as part of TRANSFORMATIONS – Recharging European Theatres and Audiences in a Post-Covid World, a project co-funded by the European Union.



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

ETC projects are jointly financed by its members.



## ABOUT ETC

---

**As the largest network of public theatres in Europe**, ETC has 63 members from 31 countries, reflecting the diversity of Europe's vibrant cultural sector.

**Founded in 1988**, ETC promotes European theatre as a vital platform for dialogue, democracy and interaction that responds to, reflects and engages with today's diverse audiences and changing societies.

ETC fosters an inclusive notion of theatre that brings Europe's social, linguistic and cultural heritage to audiences and communities in Europe and beyond. Powerful and professional ETC governance ensures that the network will thrive and grow, taking into consideration the latest trends and developments.

**The ETC's current three-year programme** of activities, "TRANSFORMATIONS – Recharging European Theatres and Audiences in a Post-Covid World", offers Member Theatres many opportunities and project possibilities. This comprehensive, groundbreaking programme is supported by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

## ABOUT RENEW CULTURE

---

Renew Culture co-founded the Theatre Green Book in 2020, and develops initiatives for sustainable culture across the world.

## ETC PUBLICATIONS

---

### Journal

Annual ETC magazine since 2017

### Casebooks

Youth Theatre – A Casebook (2020)

Participatory Theatre – A Casebook (2020)

Digital Theatre – A Casebook (2018)

### Research

*Upcoming:* Gender Equality in European Theatres (2024)

Digital Theatre – Strategies and Business Models in European Theatre (2023)

Performing Arts Recordings and Broadcasts: A practical manual on author's and related rights (2022)

Gender Equality & Diversity in European Theatres – A Study (2021)

The Art of Ageing – Bringing the Burning Issue of Global Demographic Change on Europe's Stages. Creative Research – a Documentary by the European Theatre Convention (2015)

Audiences for European Theatres. Study on Audience Development and Research in the ETC (2015)

### European Drama

*Upcoming:* Our Stories of Change Vol. 3 (2024)

Our Stories of Change Vol. 2 (2023)

Our Stories of Change Vol. 1 (2022)

Theatre is Dialogue – Awakening. New Horizons in the Independent Theatre Scene in Ukraine (2017)

Young Europe – European Drama Repertoire for Young Audiences.

A Selection of Five Plays From Cyprus, France, Germany and the Netherlands. Theater der Zeit. (2013)

## ETC MEMBERS\*

---

**ALBANIA** National Theatre of Albania (Tirana) / **AUSTRIA** Landestheater Linz, Schauspielhaus Graz, Schauspielhaus Salzburg, Tiroler Landestheater, Volkstheater Wien / **BELGIUM** Théâtre de Liege / **BULGARIA** Theatre and Music Centre Kardjali, National Theatre Ivan Vazov (Sofia) / **CROATIA** Croatian National Theatre (Zagreb) / **CYPRUS** Cyprus Theatre Organisation THOC (Nicosia) / **CZECH REPUBLIC** Národní divadlo – National Theatre Prague / **FRANCE** Théâtre National de Bretagne (Rennes) / **GEORGIA** Tbilisi International Festival of Theatre / **GERMANY** Deutsches Theater Berlin, Staatstheater Braunschweig, Theater Dortmund, Staatsschauspiel Dresden, Theater und Orchester Heidelberg, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, Theater Magdeburg / **GREECE** National Theatre of Greece (Athens) / **ITALY** Fondazione Teatro Due (Parma), Ravenna Teatro-Centro di Produzione, PAV, Teatro Stabile di Torino – National Theatre, / **KOSOVO** National Theatre of Kosovo (Pristina) / **LATVIA** Dailes Theatre (Riga) / **LITHUANIA** State Small Theatre of Vilnius / **LUXEMBOURG** Escher Theater (Esch-sur-Alzette), Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg / **MALTA** Teatru Malta (Żejtun) / **MONTENEGRO** Royal Theatre „Zetski dom“ (Cetinje), Montenegrin National Theatre / **NETHERLANDS** De Toneelmakerij (Amsterdam), Het Zuidelijk Toneel (Tilburg) / **NORWAY** Det Norske Teatret (Oslo) / **POLAND** JK Opole Theatre / **PORTUGAL** São Luiz Teatro Municipal, Teatro Nacional D. Maria II (Lisbon), Fundação Centro Cultural de Belém (Lisbon), Teatro Municipal Sá de Miranda (Viana do Castelo) / **ROMANIA** “Marin Sorescu” National Theatre of Craiova, Timisoara National Theatre / **SERBIA** National Theatre in Belgrade / **SLOVAKIA** Slovak National Drama Theatre (Bratislava), Divadlo Jána Palárika (Trnava) / **SLOVENIA** Prešeren Theatre Kranj, Slovensko Narodno Gledališče Nova Gorica / **SPAIN** Teatro Arriaga Antzokia (Bilbao) / **SWEDEN** Göteborgs Stadsteater, Folkteatern Göteborg, Malmö Stadsteater / **SWITZERLAND** Schauspielhaus Zürich / **TUNISIA** Opera Theatre of Tunis / **UNITED KINGDOM** Royal Lyceum Theatre (Edinburgh), Belarus Free Theatre (London), Young Vic (London) / **UKRAINE** Dakh Theatre – Centre of Contemporary Arts (Kyiv), Ivan Franko National Academic Drama Theatre, Kyiv National Academic Molodyy Theatre (Kyiv), Left Bank Theatre (Kyiv), Lesia Ukrainka Theatre (Lviv)

*Honorary Members:* Ola E. Bo (Norway), Christa Müller (Germany)

\*Membership as of June 2024

## ETC CONTACT

---

### European Theatre Convention

*Head office*

c/o Deutsches Theater, Schumannstr. 13a, 10117 Berlin, Germany

*EU office*

c/o European House for Culture, Sainctelettesquare 17,  
1000 Brussels, Belgium

convention@europeantheatre.eu

+49 (0)30 / 284 41 460

www.europeantheatre.eu





## **Imprint**

Published by the European Theatre Convention (ETC)

*ETC Executive Director:* Heidi Wiley

*Edited by* Christy Romer

*Written by* Paddy Dillon and Lisa Burger

*Design and Layout by* Viktor Nübel, [lieberungewoehnlich.de](http://lieberungewoehnlich.de)

© 2024. All rights reserved with ETC

European theatres now have a well-tested, step-by-step guide to reach net zero emissions by 2030: the ETC Theatre Green Book. But can this actually be used to enact meaningful change? And are its solutions applicable across all of Europe, given its diverse funding structures, social contexts, geographic variations, and theatrical traditions?

**Sustainability & Theatre: ETC Theatre Green Book – Applied Research Study** provides reflections on these questions from the 9 ‘Focus Group’ theatres that spent the 2023-24 season implementing and refining the ETC Theatre Green Book. Their successful steps and identified challenges – relating to touring companies and national theatres alike - helped make the tool ready for theatres across Europe to use and embed in their work.

This publication is part of a study series commissioned by the European Theatre Convention (ETC), the largest network of publicly funded theatres in Europe with 63 members from 31 European countries. ETC is co-funded by the European Union.