



**Evaluation summary for Tanzfonds Erbe  
– Funding for artistic projects dedicated  
to the cultural heritage of dance**

**An initiative by the German Federal Cultural  
Foundation**

**Project executor: the non-profit limited-liability  
entrepreneurial company Diehl+Ritter gUG**



**Author:**

**Madeline Ritter, Managing Director Diehl+Ritter gUG  
and Project Director Tanzfonds Erbe**

Berlin, November 2016

*“For us, Tanzfonds Erbe’s invitation to bid really captured ‘the spirit of the times’.”\**

## **Background**

After the end of the funding initiative Tanzplan Deutschland in 2011, the German Federal Cultural Foundation (KSB) initiated two dance funds: Tanzfonds Erbe – Funding for artistic projects dedicated to the cultural heritage of dance (duration 2011-2018/19) and Tanzfonds Partner – Funding for partnerships between dance institutions and schools (duration 2011-2014). Project executor is Diehl+Ritter gUG. Ingo Diehl and Madeline Ritter, the former director of Tanzplan Deutschland who is also project director of Tanzfonds Erbe, were responsible for the content-related conception of the funds, both of which have been evaluated: while the self-evaluation method – using the survey database of the Federal Association of Dance in Schools – was chosen for Tanzfonds Partner (a summary of the evaluation is available at <http://partner.tanzfonds.de/auswertung.html>), the evaluation of Tanzfonds Erbe was conducted externally by Dr Cornelia Dümcke, cultural economist and managing director of CULTURE CONCEPTS ([www.cultureconcepts.de](http://www.cultureconcepts.de)).

## **Short description of the Tanzfonds Erbe funding initiative**

Tanzfonds Erbe funds artistic projects dedicated to the cultural heritage of dance in order to research dance history in different ways and to make it visible to the public. The projects refer to different eras in dance history, to artistic personalities and style-defining works from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. No limits are set on what formats the treatments can take, whether they be reconstructions, new interpretations, lecture performances, films or websites. The funded artists use a wide range of archives for their in-depth research, work closely with experts such as historians, scientists or choreologists, and also contribute to the clarification of copyright issues. The funded projects are documented by Tanzfonds Erbe’s executing agency, Diehl+Ritter gUG, and published on the [tanzfonds.de](http://tanzfonds.de) website.

Interested parties can apply for up to EUR 100,000 with 100% funding from the fund or, from 2015, with 80% funding from the fund. Applicants can be individuals and institutions with a proven background in dance. The funding decisions and the awarding of funding takes place based on the recommendations of a jury. In the period of the project being evaluated (2012 to 2014), the fund awarded a total of approx. EUR 2.5 million to projects.

## **Evaluation format: subject matter, questions, and methodology**

Subject matter of the evaluation are the 32 projects funded between 2012 and 2014, in two application phases. The evaluator investigated whether Tanzfonds Erbe has met its conceptual and implementation targets. It is also intended that the evaluation results will help shape the design of funding programmes in the future.

The fund has set itself an overarching goal, namely to foster a diverse and lively cultural memory of dance. Other goals are the participation of people involved in as many different dance sectors as possible, the visibility of the funded projects, and public access to the project results through documentation that is freely accessible online for the long-term.

Three key questions formed the starting point for the investigation:

1. How did looking at the topic of dance heritage influence the artistic work of those involved in the projects – for example, did it result in plans for further heritage-related projects?
2. What helped the project? What hindered it? (Application form, funding criteria, funding volumes, duration, advice, documentation obligation, copyrights, research of material, integrating external experts and archives, educational measures, networking with other TANZFONDS ERBE projects, etc.)
3. Did the funding initiative have any unexpected effects?

In order to answer these key questions, the evaluator developed a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators and questions aimed at the funded projects' artistic directors. All project directors were surveyed and interviewed in a time period from November 2014 to September 2015. The questionnaires and individual interviews were then evaluated on an anonymous and qualitative basis. The central building blocks of the investigation also included desk research based on the comprehensive text and video material on the Tanzfonds Erbe homepage, an evaluation of the extensive database, of press material and other documents from the project executor's archive, as well as of related international literature.

*“As a dance company at a small municipal theatre, we’re under permanent production pressure. The Tanzfonds Erbe project created the conditions for us to work differently, namely in a focused way on a task that was a learning process for everyone involved.”\**

### **Key findings**

- Tanzfonds Erbe's overarching goal, “to foster a diverse and lively cultural memory of dance”, was achieved in a comparatively short period of time, particularly so considering the instigative approach typical of the KSB.
- The funding initiative has succeeded in making the topic of dance heritage a prominent theme in current cultural politics, highlighting existing gaps and needs. Tanzfonds Erbe continues the relevance of Tanzplan Deutschland in a positive, if specific, way. As with Tanzplan, the funding initiative has had an international reach, inspiring e.g. Switzerland to set up a very similar promotional fund called Dance as Cultural Heritage – Awareness-raising measures.
- The following point is important for increasing political commitment to dance heritage at the federal level: Tanzfonds Erbe actively animates two UNESCO Conventions ratified by the Federal Republic of Germany. The first one is the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage; the second one is the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005.
- Equally positive is the assessment that Tanzfonds Erbe in its intentions and with its open project-tendering procedures is an initiative that looks to the dance scene itself for impulses and innovative approaches.
- In relation to the funding initiative's sub-goals – such as the participation of people from various dance sectors, the visibility of the funded projects, and public access to the project results – the outcome of the evaluation is that Tanzfonds Erbe has met its goals to a very large extent.

- The fact that Tanzfonds Erbe is interested in the specifics of German dance-theatre and takes into account – and even challenges – the different production logics and funding structures in the subsidised and independent sectors should be emphasised positively. The latter applies particularly to municipal theatres that had little experience in preparing project applications. The approved projects were almost equally spread across national and municipal theatres as well as independent choreographers or dance companies. Assuming the existence of 65 dance companies at national and municipal theatres in Germany, Tanzfonds Erbe has reached and funded approx. 20% of them, or every fifth publicly funded theatre.
- Beyond the institutions and people who actually applied for funding, the projects managed to involve a comparatively large circle of people from a wide range of sectors and increase the visibility of dance heritage in the public domain through diverse educational formats. In addition to 27 national and municipal theatres and 68 independent theatres and dance companies, 31 universities and 67 archives were also involved, which is indicative of the funding initiative's interdisciplinary approach. The number of artistic and other participants is calculated to be approx. 2,000. Over the course of two funding years, a visitor figure of almost 10,000 was achieved from 290 performances and 75 guest performances. Finally, 11 of the 32 projects were included for one or two seasons in the programmes of the respective national and municipal theatres, even if the continued presence of heritage pieces in repertoires is a fundamental problem due to limited financial resources. A further 30,000 people attended 262 educational formats (symposiums, workshops, audience discussions, films, exhibitions, and others).
- The number of press reports in 2014 had doubled since 2012 and points to a clear increase in the resonance and visibility of Tanzfonds Erbe in the national media landscape.
- The initial rejection of funding focused entirely on the dance-heritage theme – particularly on the independent scene – has evidently died away. The funding initiative has not only filled a gap but also opened up and consolidated a discussion that was previously only conducted informally. This can be seen as a desirable and positive effect that could not have been foreseen at the start of the initiative.
- Programme and project management by the Diehl+Ritter team received extremely positive assessments in the evaluation result. Funding volumes, duration, award procedures, etc. were also assessed extremely positively at project level, with few exceptions. Compared to other funding programmes, Tanzfonds Erbe has singled itself out to be an 'exceptional project' for the dance scene.
- The learning experiences of those involved in a Tanzfonds Erbe project are particularly significant in relation to the question about unexpected effects. However looking back at the evaluation, it emerged that Key Question 3 was of rather secondary importance for participants.

*“Our project had extremely important functions for the artistic and aesthetic education of the young dancers involved.”\**

### **Recommendations from the evaluation**

The KSB's decision to continue Tanzfonds Erbe up to 2018/19 is due to the high level of resonance in the dance scene and media. The findings of the external evaluation in many respects confirm the overall success of the funding initiative, which justifies its extension. Nevertheless, based on the written questionnaires of the projects' artistic directors, the external evaluation also throws up issues and gives suggestions for critical reflection. The author of the evaluation report has compiled the following recommendations from these issues and suggestions:

- Initiation of a 'round table' with relevant persons from the arena of cultural policy, representatives from the dance scene and the Tanzfonds team, in order to ensure sustainable research, preservation and dissemination of dance for the future, even after the anticipated end of Tanzfonds Erbe.
- Public discussion about the content-related focus of Tanzfonds Erbe with regard to questions thrown up by the evaluation, e.g. about 'canon formation' or the differentiation between reconstructing, reworking or merging into a new work. The format for reflection and discussion could be an independent conference.
- Tanzfonds Erbe's focus on the existing theatre structures in Germany (i.e. publicly funded theatres and the independent scene) offers considerable added value and should be strengthened further.
- The evaluation points out the potential and significance of archives in relation to safeguarding and disseminating German dance heritage. At the same time, their problems – which are caused by very limited human and financial resources, not only at dance archives – are becoming visible. Tanzfonds Erbe can't solve the problem, but it can create awareness at the cultural policy level of the importance of archives and their precarious situation.
- Tanzfonds Erbe should push for more exchange between the projects than has been the case so far. This recommendation is based on the wishes of many people who took part in the questionnaires and interviews. A suitable format still needs to be found, but it could easily be a workshop.
- Thought should be given to a book project on dance heritage in Germany that goes beyond project documentation. The publication's target group would be people involved in the dance scene, training and educational institutions, and not least the field of cultural politics.
- The Tanzfonds Erbe website [tanzfonds.de](http://tanzfonds.de) is already a 'treasure trove' for dance training and educational institutions in Germany. It needs to be used more proactively while the potential of the existing project 'archive' needs to be communicated externally to a greater degree.
- Another recommendation is the relaunch of the [tanzfonds.de](http://tanzfonds.de) website to improve transparency and increased usability. The financial and legal requirements should be satisfied in order to safeguard public access to the Tanzfonds Erbe website in the future. *(In close agreement with the KSB, Diehl+Ritter carried out a fundamental redesign of the website in 2015. As a result, [tanzfonds.de](http://tanzfonds.de) won Europe's highest accolade for cultural heritage in May 2016 – the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards 2016. Project executor's note.)*

*"We see looking at dance heritage as a key factor in the development of innovation, of something new."\**

(\* Statements from individual interviews with the project manager)