

Money for European zoos and aquaria from the United States:

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Is it possible for zoo organisations based in Europe to receive donations from US Foundations?

Absolutely. Contrary to assumption, US grant making foundations give huge amounts of money outside the USA. Recent research shows a record figure in the region of **\$3.8 billion**¹ deployed beyond the USA frontiers. Europe's leading zoos, aquariums and similar organisations may well wish to consider this area as a source of significant income.

Topics such as environmentalism, zoological research, and animal protection do figure amongst this giving. However, Europe's zoos should also consider their ambitions and needs in terms of:

- education
- culture
- national patrimony and heritage
- socio-economic development within your cities, regions and countries
- international development and work with indigenous peoples as part of your projects abroad
- scientific research

It is particularly important not to be discouraged at the lack of explicit reference to zoos in foundation literature: it is the work you do that matters, not so much the type of organisation that you are. Zoo decision makers should otherwise think laterally and flexibly as to how their project might fit a given foundation's priorities. Organisations in countries recently joining the Europe Union as well as Candidate, Pre-Candidate and New Neighbourhood nations might be valued as relatively unusual and therefore desirable applicants, extending the geographic reach a given foundation can point to. The availability of very considerable EU 'Structural Funds', Pre-Accession Instrument and New Neighbourhood funding as matching funds may be an added inducement.

Some foundations only support specific countries (e.g. the Lincy Foundation funds projects in Armenia). If a US funder already supports cultural institutions in your country, especially museums, why not the major zoo, as well as part of the overall cultural landscape..? In other cases, a foundation may not be especially interested in your home country, but be willing to support your zoo's in situ projects in the developing world.

It is worth noting that most large and medium sized zoos in the USA would have at least one member of staff solely devoted to writing grant applications to foundations.

¹ Please see figure 2 below. All figures are sourced from the Foundation Centre, New York

What exactly are “US grant making foundations”?

In the USA grant making foundations are legal entities that exist purely to support ‘good causes’ or charitable organisations in one way or another. Some will give to a very wide range of causes, other are very specific. For instance the Lube Foundation (<http://www.lubee.org/>) only makes small grants for the conservation of fruit eating bats. Some will have been set up by very wealthy individuals or families, others by corporations. There are approximately 50,000 such organisations obliged by US law to donate a proportion of their funds every year to appropriate causes. Nearly all foundations provide information on what they will and will not support.

What steps are needed to access such funds?

Obviously such organisations receive far more requests for funds than they can actually support. However many applications are turned down simply because they are inappropriate or badly presented. So first a clear and credible project should be drawn up.

The next step is to identify an initial ‘long list’ of foundations whose aims seem to generally meet your project. You can do this through various literature available, through the internet, personal contact or through a research agency.

Then contact the organisation and request their specific grant making guidelines. Some foundations will ask for an initial letter of enquiry; others a full application.

Many foundations will only make a grant to or through something called a 501(c)(3). This is basically the official legal designation of a USA charity. An organisation outside the USA has therefore two main options:

- It can set up a 501(c)(3) that support it. For example, Sofia Zoo in Bulgaria might set up a 501(c)(3) called “American Friends of Sofia Zoo”.
- It can be supported by an existing 501(c)(3). Some 501(c)(3)s welcome the opportunity to support innovative projects outside the USA.

European zoos should follow the specific instructions precisely when actually applying for a grant

It is wise to have an American citizen or someone who knows a good deal about US foundations to review your application to ensure it is fully comprehensible in appropriate American English

If you receive a grant, you should follow the reporting and monitoring requirement exactly.

Whether or not you receive a grant you should thank the foundation, ask for feedback on your application and for suggestions as to any other foundations who might be interested in your project

Can you give some outline guidance as to the kind of projects US Foundations might be looking to support?

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As above, each Foundation has different priorities and policies. However, in very general terms, many US foundations are looking for ground breaking projects which can act as models to be replicated elsewhere. Thus if you can make a case that your zoo or aquarium is doing something that no -one else has tried before (- at least within its context), this may well be an advantage.

In a similar way many foundations are now looking not only to respond to problems, but to actively influence policy on the part of regional, national and international authorities as well as to influence the 'public mind' or social attitudes as a whole. Awareness raising, education, or information provision campaigns run by a zoo or a network of zoos might therefore attract interest

In the past most foundations might have only wanted to support specific, time limited projects. Today however some funders are looking to help build the long term capacity of a recipient organisation so that it can ultimately become self sufficient in the good work it carries out. This could be especially relevant for struggling zoos in parts of Europe who might be able to transform themselves, become entirely self sufficient and expand their good work with sufficient investment into their infrastructure.

Can you tell me which US foundations have donated the most money outside of the USA recently?

Foundation name	International grant dollar	No of international grants	Primary focus of interest
1. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	1,233,160,002	134	Supports efforts to improve equity in global health through the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases in developing countries; and to bridge the global digital divide by providing access to knowledge through public libraries.
2. Ford Foundation	258,502,0431	328	Seeks to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement through programs in asset building and community development; education, media, sexuality, religion, arts and culture; and peace and social justice
3. Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	83,184,068	79	Seeks to preserve the biodiversity and health of the environment in the Andes-Amazon region and the North Pacific, and supports scientific research through marine microbiology and conservation
4. John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	73,138,000	223	Seeks to promote conservation and sustainable development, human rights and international justice, international peace and security, and reproductive health.
5. Rockefeller Foundation	72,306,649	329	Seeks to improve the lives of poor

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			people worldwide through programs in the areas of food security, creativity and culture, global health equity, global inclusion, higher education in Africa, and regional programs in Southeast Asia.
6. William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	56,595,034	165	Supports global development in the areas of education, population, environment and the performing arts.
7. W. K. Kellogg Foundation IN MI.	56,315,269	122	Promotes regional development in Latin America and the Caribbean and helps reduce poverty and improve quality of life in southern Africa's rural communities
8. Freeman Foundation	53,456,718	223	Supports international exchange programs, fellowships, and international studies, with a focus on Asia.
9. Carnegie Corporation of New York	42,415,000	113	Supports efforts for international peace and security, and seeks to strengthen international development in Sub-Saharan Africa by enhancing universities, women's opportunities, and libraries.
10. Starr Foundation	41,392,820	101	Supports efforts to provide healthcare to underserved communities, promote democratic values and international relations
11. David and Lucile Packard Foundation	39,544,027	143	Supports family planning and reproductive health services and environmental conservation.
12. Andrew W. Mellon Foundation	37,741,100	109	Supports environmental programs in Latin America and South Africa, and higher education in South Africa
13. Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	25,356,798	211	Supports the strengthening of civil society, and seeks to protect and conserve the environment, and reduce pove
14. Lincy Foundation	25,037,847	14	Supports Armenian charities.
15. Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation	22,936,500	44	Seeks to improve the lives of poor people in Israel and the Former Soviet Union through programs in the areas of shelter, nutrition, health, and socialization
Fig 1: Source: The Foundation Center, International Grantmaking Update, 2006. Based on a sample of all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,172 larger foundations.			

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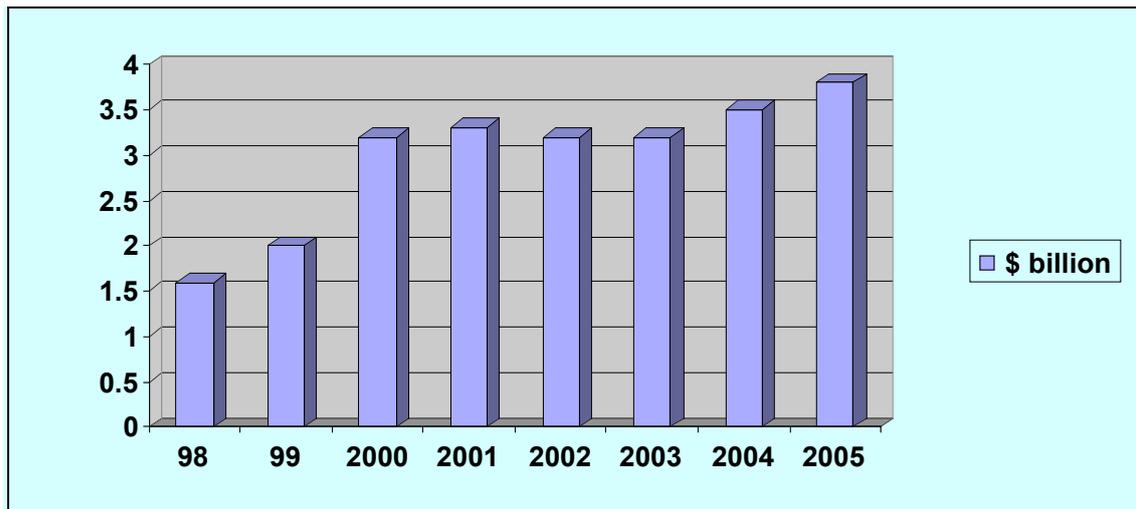


Fig 2: Rise in overall international giving 1998 - 2005: Source: The Foundation Center

How can I learn more and take things forward?

Please contact me, John Regan at Johnregan@freeuk, and I will direct you towards further information.

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