

MEETING: 21/03/2019

Ref: 15231

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital

Zoological Society of London

Adv: Geraldine Page

Base: Westminster

Amount requested: £99,380

Benefit: Hounslow

Amount recommended: £99,400

The Applicant

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL), a charity founded in 1826, is a world-renowned centre of excellence for conservation science and applied conservation. ZSL's mission is to promote and achieve the worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats. Its UK & Europe Conservation Programme is designed to protect and restore freshwater, estuarine and marine habitats; to secure the status of focal species 'in situ' and to work with 'citizen scientists' to deliver conservation, thereby engaging more people in the management and conservation of their environment.

The Application

This application is for two years' continuation funding for the salary of two part-time posts (0.8 Project Manager and 0.2 Project Coordinator) and related Tidal Thames Conservation project costs you initially funded in 2015. Building on the work done over the last 3 years, this continuation funding will empower communities to make improvements to London's rivers and watersheds, improving the aquatic environment. It will continue to engage Londoners and wider news audiences in the importance of rivers and empower them to take conservation action.

The Recommendation

ZSL is a world-renowned centre of excellence for conservation science and applied conservation and has demonstrated very well its ability to engage Londoners in the river and aquatic environment. There is 600KM of river that flows through London with fantastic potential to link green spaces and build greater wildlife values in rivers. The statutory framework for the projects; locally focused decision making, and positive community action are at the heart of the EU Water Framework Directive. Well-designed citizen science projects can help provide the evidence needed to underpin local decision making and will strengthen relationships between statutory agencies and trained volunteer groups. The project fits well with your Connecting the Capital Programme priorities, funding is recommended;

£99,400 over two further years (£49,100, £50,300) for the salary of two part-time posts (0.8 Project Manager and 0.2 Project Coordinator) and related Tidal Thames Conservation project costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
09/07/2015	£150,000 over three years (£52,000; £49,000; £49,000) for the salary of two part-time posts (0.8 project manager and 0.2 project coordinator) and related Tidal Thames Conservation project costs.
13/02/2013	£50,000 towards the capital costs of providing access facilities at Tiger Territory.

Background and detail of proposal

Since 2011 over 1,300 volunteers have been trained across London by ZSL, when it started working with Citizen Scientists to deliver river conservation impact. It has developed Citizen Science methodologies, such as the Outfall Safari (a way of working with volunteers to map and record the impact of polluted surface water outfalls in a river) and Juvenile fish monitoring, that are considered best practice by the Environment Agency and used by NGOs elsewhere in the UK. This project will train a further 300 volunteers in gathering evidence for joined up approaches to managing London's environment. Work delivered during the first three years of your funding has been very successful and informed the 2017 London Environment Strategy; conservation priorities in the Environment Agency's Eel Management Plan for the Thames; Thames Water's Business Plan 2020 -2025; and Environment Agency regulation of water companies on the issue of preventing diffuse sources of pollution.

Financial Information

ZSL's reserves policy is to hold £6.7m to cover three months' worth of fixed operating costs which covers animal disease, zoo closure and loss of revenue. The Trustees are committed to increasing the level of general reserves through commercial activities and through managing the phasing of future capital investments in order to build up the general reserves to reach their target level. The figures for the level of forecast free reserves have been provided by the organisation, after accounting for transfers to and from designated funds for fixed asset additions and depreciation. Your Officer has no concerns about the viability of the organisation.

Year end as at 30 April	2018 Audited Accounts £	2019 Forecast £	2020 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	65,597,000	65,261,000	68,829,000
- % of Income confirmed as at 21/02/19		74%	0%
Expenditure	(63,949,000)	(72,518,000)	(73,181,000)
Remeasurement of defined benefit obligation (pension)	4,591,000		
Total surplus/(deficit)	6,239,000	(7,257,000)	(4,352,000)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	2,855,000	(4,258,000)	(2,511,000)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	3,376,000	(2,999,000)	(1,841,000)
- Endowment Funds	8,000		
	6,239,000	(7,257,000)	(4,352,000)
Cost of Raising Funds	1,532,000	1,178,000	1,268,000
- % of Income	2.3%	1.8%	1.8%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	50,318,000	57,503,000	59,984,000
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	3,781,000	4,503,000	4,303,000
No of months of operating expenditure	0.9	0.9	0.9
Reserves policy target	6,700,000	6,700,000	6,700,000
No of months of operating expenditure	1.6	1.4	1.3
Free reserves over/(under) target	(2,919,000)	(2,197,000)	(2,397,000)