

Transneft Funds Aquarium To Make a Splash at APEC

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The main recipient of Transneft charitable donations is an aquarium on Russky Island, which received 5.5 billion rubles (\$189 million) from the pipeline operator last year.

Transneft made a total of 6.7 billion rubles in charitable contributions last year, according to its website. The money for the aquarium was channeled through the Constantine Fund, which is led by Vladimir Kozhin, head of the Office for Presidential Affairs.

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin initiated the creation of the aquarium off the shore of Vladivostok seven years ago, during his presidency, and he personally approved the design of the main building in the form of a giant clamshell.

The opening of the aquarium was timed to coincide with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit to be held in the Primorye region in the summer of 2012, a person familiar with the project said. The official commissioning is scheduled for the end of summer

or early autumn, aquarium press secretary Alexei Kushnir said.

Construction of the aquarium by the Office for Presidential Affairs' directorate for construction in the Far Eastern Federal District began in May 2010.

The cost of the aquarium is unknown. Putin promised to allocate 1.2 billion rubles to it. Primorye Governor Sergei Darkin estimated the cost of the project at \$100 million to \$110 million, but that sum has already been exceeded.

A person close to Transneft said the company took full responsibility for financing the construction, without the procurement of equipment or marine animals.

The aquarium will contain 25,000 tons of water. For comparison, the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta, the world's largest, contains about 30,000 tons. It cost about \$300 million to build.

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