

MASTS Small Grant Scheme

SG54 Title: Balanced truck for fieldwork equipment transportation (Amount requested: £332)

The funds requested under the MASTS Small Grant Scheme were used to purchase a balanced truck for transporting benthic chambers and circuits for measuring benthic metabolism both in the Eden estuary, as part of the on-going SERG work of the SOI in collaboration with the CoZo group in Stirling, and in Morecambe bay and the Essex saltmarshes during the MASTS supported CBESS project.

In the Eden estuary, the work is still on-going and the truck has allowed increasing the amount of measurements to be taken in the field each month. Sampling for this project will continue at least until May 2014 with the truck being used each month. These measurements will contribute to show whether the restoration of saltmarsh plants in the Eden estuary is accompanied by a restoration to functionality of these saltmarsh-covered areas. Knowing this will help establishing the value of restoring saltmarsh plants for the provision of ecosystem services in Scottish estuaries.



Figure 1: Carrying equipment for the CBESS campaign taking place in Essex in Winter 2013.

As part of the field campaign towards the CBESS consortium, having the balanced truck gave the SERG team the means to carry the amount of equipment needed for that campaign (see picture). These campaigns were very demanding in terms of equipment needed and had severe constraints in the amount of days available to perform the fieldwork. It was necessary to be able to carry all the equipment with the minimum amount of people needed to actually carry out the measurements (Figure 1). In addition to allow to fulfil the team's commitments for the consortium's campaign, having the balanced truck contributed to promoting the excellence of the science carried out by our laboratory and to meeting the requirement of MASTS for science excellence and cooperation. The field campaigns are now complete for this project and the data is in the process of being analysed. This work will provide significant new information on the relationship between saltmarsh and mudflat biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The SERG team will continue to make use of the balance truck for future fieldwork thus keeping an important flexibility for achieving excellent science and cooperation.