PRESS RELEASE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

**Dundee investment helps reduce economic and ecological cost of research**

Investment from the University of Dundee is helping to reduce the environmental and financial cost of carrying out vital medical research.

Funding of around £75,000 has been provided to install high-powered solar panels at the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF) research facility in Siruseri, India. The centre contains a Biobank which stores the samples necessary for MDRF’s research programmes, including INSPIRED, a £7 million Dundee-led project that seeks to improve diabetes outcomes in India.

The Biobank requires a reliable electrical supply 24 hours per day to ensure the samples are stored safely. Over 50% of the electrical power consumption at the research facility is by the Biobank. Installation of the solar panels will ensure that there is always power available.

INSPIRED is funded by the National Institute of Health Research Global Health programme, which supports high-quality applied health research for the direct and primary benefit of people in low and middle-income countries (LMICs). Providing sustainable improvements for LMICs is a key requirement of funding.

It is estimated that the solar panels will save the facility approximately £12,100 per year. After the costs of installation have been recovered, this will provide an estimated net saving of £216,000 over 24 years whilst also significantly reducing its carbon footprint.

Dr Fred Comerford, NIHR-Global Health on Diabetes Outcomes Research Unit Manager at Dundee said, “Through this funding, we are demonstrating that the University, through this NIHR funding, is both supporting research capacity in LMICs and promoting and investing in green solutions.

“One of the central principles of NIHR's Global Health Research programme is to provide a lasting benefit for the low to middle income countries and communities they work with, long after the end of the research project. This is not limited to the outputs from the research but is also achieved by increasing local capacity for future research through delivering training, and through the improvement of infrastructure and facilities within the LMIC partner’s organisation.

“MDRF is a non-profit organisation that depends largely on private donors and government research support. It is dedicated to improving the understanding and management of diabetes in the Indian population, and the solar panels will bring a long-term financial benefit to the organisation.”

“We are grateful for the impact that the solar panels donated by University of Dundee has made at our research facility," says Dr Viswanathan Mohan, Founder President of the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, Chennai. "The facility houses a state-of-the-art bio-depository of over 650,000 valuable bio-specimens, the operating cost of which has resulted in over  £36,600 spent annually on only electricity costs. The 105 Kilowatt roof top array is a welcome, sustainable infrastructure addition.”

Dr RM Anjana, Vice President of the Foundation said "These solar panels significantly contribute to our sustainability goals. Being a renewable source of energy for over 25 years, we will cut energy use each year by £12,100 annually. We will be able to direct those funds to pursuing promising and exciting research.”

INSPIRED researchers are working to better understand who gets diabetes, how it progresses, why some people respond better than others to treatments, and why some patients develop complications.

To do this, they need to study how genes influence susceptibility to type 2 diabetes in different populations,

In 2017, the University of Dundee was awarded a £7 million grant from the National Institute of Health Research Global Health programme to establish INSPIRED, a major new Scotland-India clinical partnership to combat diabetes.

The NIHR Global Health Research programme supports high-quality applied health research for the direct and primary benefit of people in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), using Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding.

INSPIRED sees Dundee’s world leading expertise in the use of medical records to deliver improved care in diabetes ‘twinned’ with the large patient data set (covering over 400,000 Indian diabetic patients) collected by Dr Mohan’s Diabetes Specialities Centres, the largest clinical network of diabetes care in India.

Notes to editors:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is the nation's largest funder of health and care research. The NIHR:

* Funds, supports and delivers high quality research that benefits the NHS, public health and social care
* Engages and involves patients, carers and the public in order to improve the reach, quality and impact of research
* Attracts, trains and supports the best researchers to tackle the complex health and care challenges of the future
* Invests in world-class infrastructure and a skilled delivery workforce to translate discoveries into improved treatments and services
* Partners with other public funders, charities and industry to maximise the value of research to patients and the economy

The NIHR was established in 2006 to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research, and is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. In addition to its national role, the NIHR supports applied health research for the direct and primary benefit of people in low- and middle-income countries, using UK aid from the UK government.