

# Asterand Awarded US Government Contract to Evaluate World's Largest Tissue Repository

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Asterand plc, (LSE:ATD) The US government has awarded Asterand, a leading supplier of human tissue samples and drug discovery services to the pharmaceutical industry, a contract to assess the condition and value of the Department of Defense Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) Tissue Repository.

The DoD repository is the largest tissue bank in the world and is currently overseen and managed by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. The AFIP was established by President Lincoln in 1862 and from its inception the sample repository has been the responsibility of the United States Army, in Washington DC. Currently there are approximately 7.5 million cases that span the period 1917 to the present, and over 75 million samples associated with these cases.

In 2005, a consensus panel of government, medical and commercial interests convened to evaluate the future of the AFIP Tissue Repository. Following the recommendations of this panel, the decision was made to preserve the Tissue Repository for future use in medical research and education, and a partner was sought to better understand and characterize the collection.

Asterand specializes in providing human tissue samples and research services for drug discovery and maintains a strong informatics environment for organizing such tissue and data archives. The company also has developed novel methods for characterization of preserved tissue specimens enabling application-specific use of the materials. The AFIP Tissue Repository Contract with Asterand is for \$2.9M over one year. At the end of this contract, Asterand will report on the current state of the repository and make recommendations for best practices and usage of this important biomedical resource.

"Asterand is honored to have been chosen for this prestigious project," says CEO Martyn Coombs. "It is quite humbling to consider 90 years of medical history and millions of biospecimens in any context, but especially with the opportunity to evaluate how best to apply it to modern medicine." Dr. James Eliason, the leading author of the Asterand proposal added, "In particular, this vast collection may provide materials for the study of important and rare diseases that could not otherwise be investigated in detail." The company is looking forward to working with the US government on this important contract and building a relationship to engender further collaborative efforts.

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