

Optimizing soluble protein expression: codon optimization, RBS design, and expression vector

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Molecular Biology Specialist



3 Easy Ways to Optimize Soluble Protein Expression



- 1 Codon Optimization – 2015 Updates!
- 2 Ribosomal Binding Site Design
- 3 Expression Vector Optimization
- 4 Resources

Protein Expression Workflow



Select/Design the end product
(amino acid sequence)



Choose expression system



Design expression clone
(DNA construct)



Express the protein

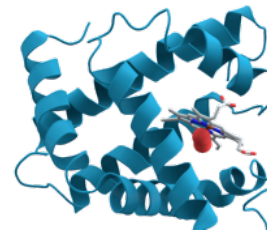
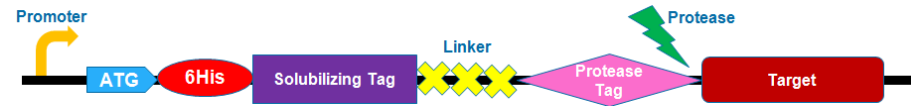
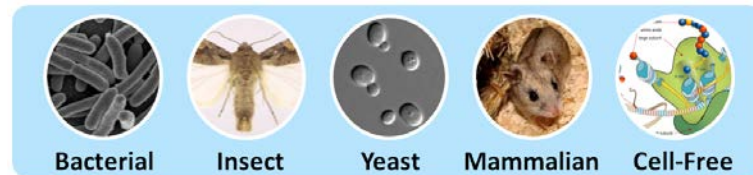


Purify the protein



Characterize the protein

MGVHECPAWLWLLLSLLSLPLGLPVLGAPPRLIC...



Protein Expression Workflow



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Express the protein

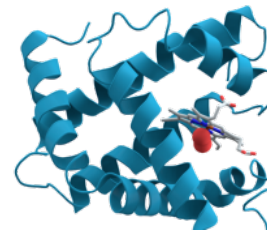
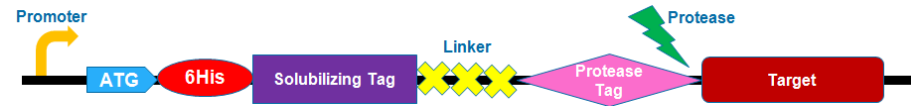
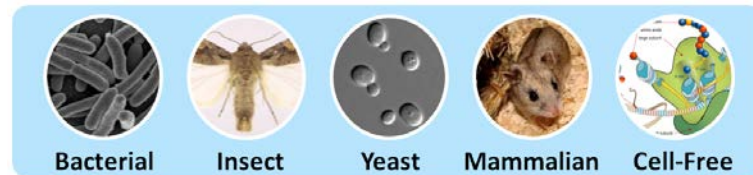


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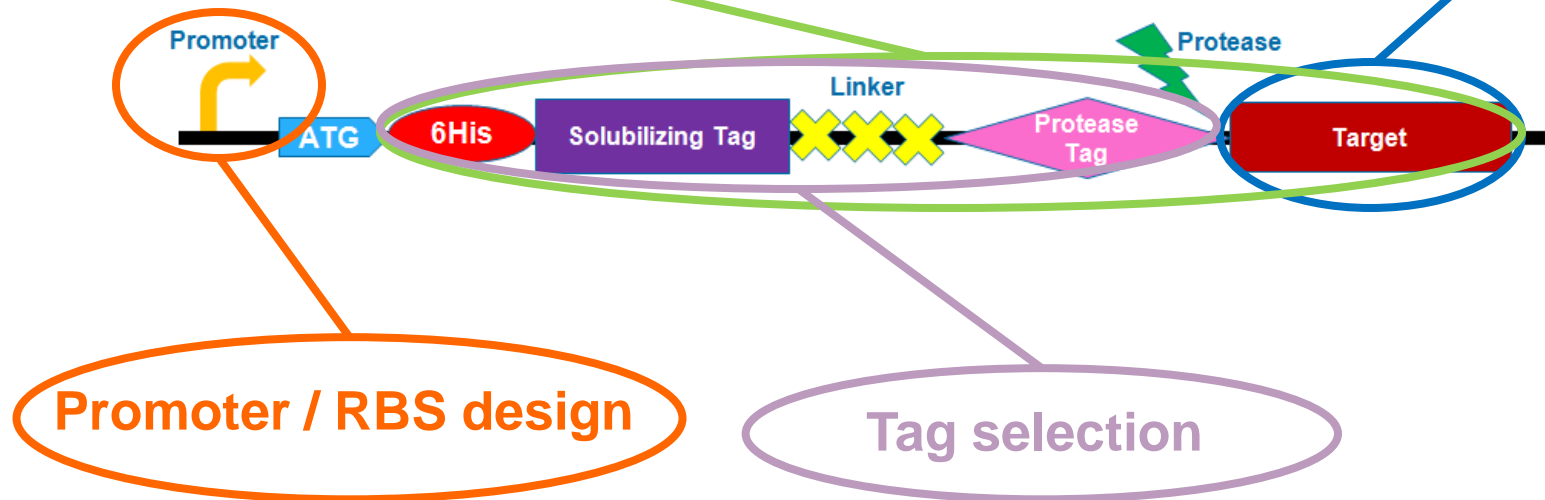


What is Codon Optimization?



Codon Optimization:
Introducing synonymous mutations that favor efficient protein expression

Protein Design:
changing the amino acid sequence



Why do Codons Matter? The Facts



- ◆ Redundancy in the genetic code
- ◆ Synonymous mutations affect protein expression rates up to 1000-fold.
- ◆ Synonymous mutations can also alter protein conformation, PTM, stability, and function.

		Second Letter					
		U	C	A	G		
1st letter	U	UUU Phe UUC UUA Leu UUG	UCU Ser UCC UCA UCG	UAU Tyr UAC UAA Stop UAG Stop	UGU Cys UGC UGA Stop UGG Trp	U C A G	3rd letter
	C	CUU CUC Leu CUA CUG	CCU CCC Pro CCA CCG	CAU His CAC CAA Gln CAG	CGU CGC Arg CGA CGG	U C A G	
	A	AUU AUC Ile AUA AUG Met	ACU ACC Thr ACA ACG	AAU Asn AAC AAA Lys AAG	AGU Ser AGC AGA Arg AGG	U C A G	
	G	GUU GUC Val GUA GUG	GCU GCC Ala GCA GCG	GAU Asp GAC GAA Glu GAG	GGU GGC Gly GGA GGG	U C A G	

Codon Optimization:

Introducing synonymous mutations that favor efficient soluble protein expression

Optimized	AGTTTTCAGGTGAGGTCCGCCCGTT
Original	AGCTTCCCGGGATGAGGGCCCCCGGTT

Evidence-Based Codon Optimization



Transcriptional Efficacy:

- GC content
- CpG dinucleotides content
- Cryptic splicing sites
- Negative CpG islands
- SD sequence
- TATA boxes
- Terminal signal

Translation Efficiency:

- Codon usage bias
- GC content
- mRNA secondary structure
- Premature PolyA sites
- RNA instability motif (ARE)
- Stable free energy of mRNA
- Internal chi sites and ribosomal binding sites

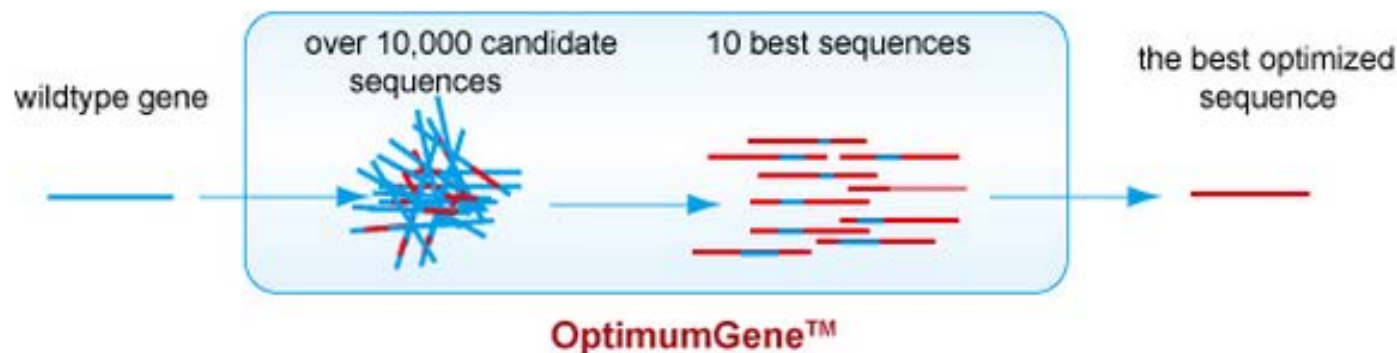
Protein Refolding:

- Codon usage bias
- Interaction of codon and anti-codon
- Codon-context
- RNA secondary structures

Flexibility to adjust the weight of different factors or add customized constraints:

- Filter out restriction sites
- Reduce similarity between library members
- Alternative codon tables / condition-specific codon preferences

Patented PSO Bioinformatic Algorithm powers OptimumGene



(12) **United States Patent**
Liu et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 8,326,547 B2**

(45) **Date of Patent:** **Dec. 4, 2012**

(54) **METHOD OF SEQUENCE OPTIMIZATION
FOR IMPROVED RECOMBINANT PROTEIN
EXPRESSION USING A PARTICLE SWARM
OPTIMIZATION ALGORITHM**

Khalid et al. (Prosiding Simposium Kebangsaan Sains Matematik ke-16 (2008) Jun. 205; pp. 1-11).*

Shen et al. (Computational Biology and Chemistry (2008) vol. 32; pp. 53-60).*

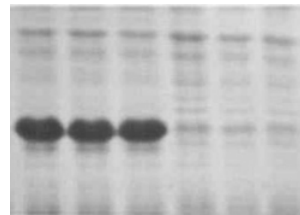
Xiao et al. (Concurrency and Computation: Practice and Experience

Codon Optimization improves expression in all host systems



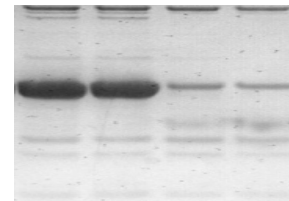
◆ *Production of proteins with single domain or subunit*

PSO Native seq



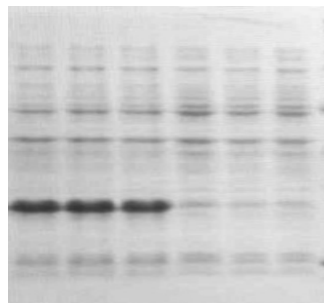
Expressed in *E. coli*

PSO Native seq



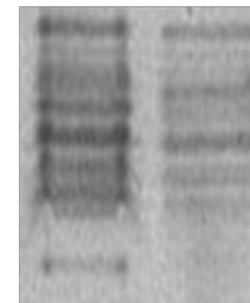
Expressed in *P. pastoris*

PSO Native seq



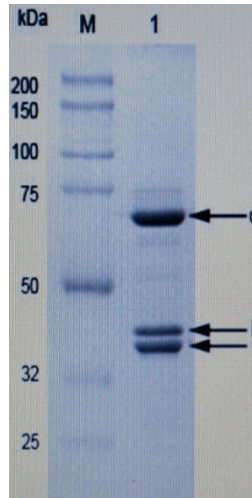
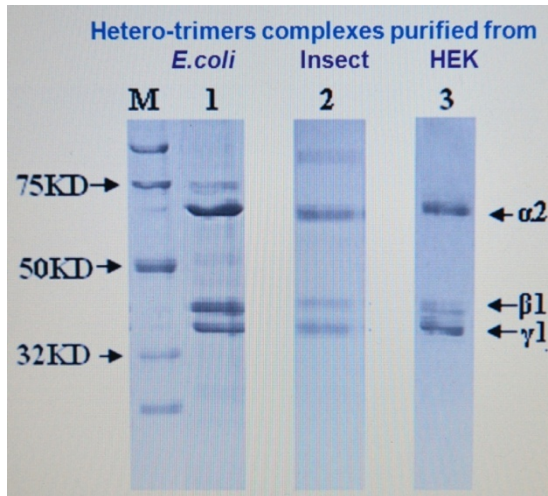
Expressed in *insect cells*

PSO Native seq



Expressed in *mammalian cells*

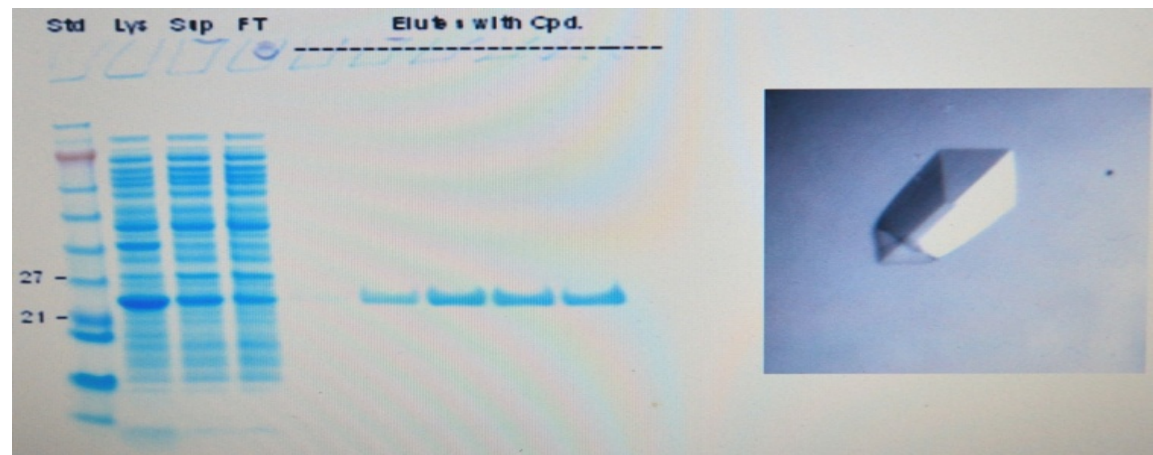
Codon Optimization aids production of protein complexes



ONE transcript for THREE subunits of a protein produced from HEK293, gene optimization was the key.

Production of LBD of a nuclear receptor associated with its ligand in correct conformation from *E. coli*,

PSO contributed to success.

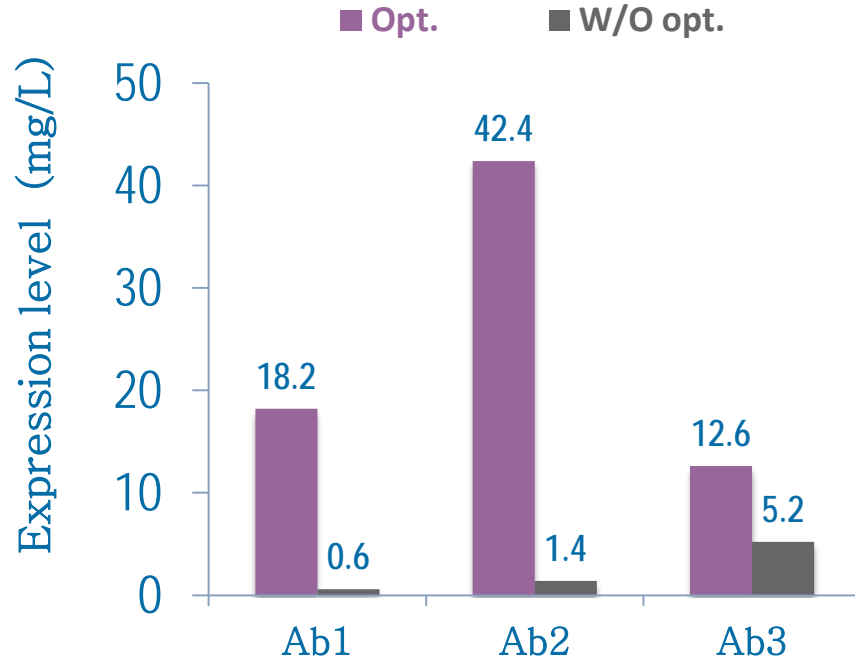


Codon Optimization improves mAb production yield

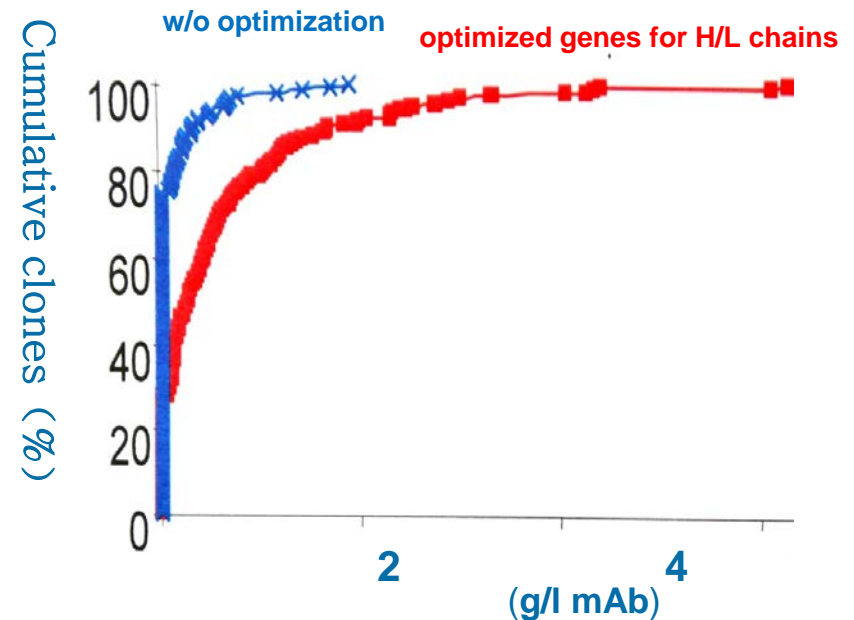


◆ *Production of monoclonal antibodies*

Transient expression



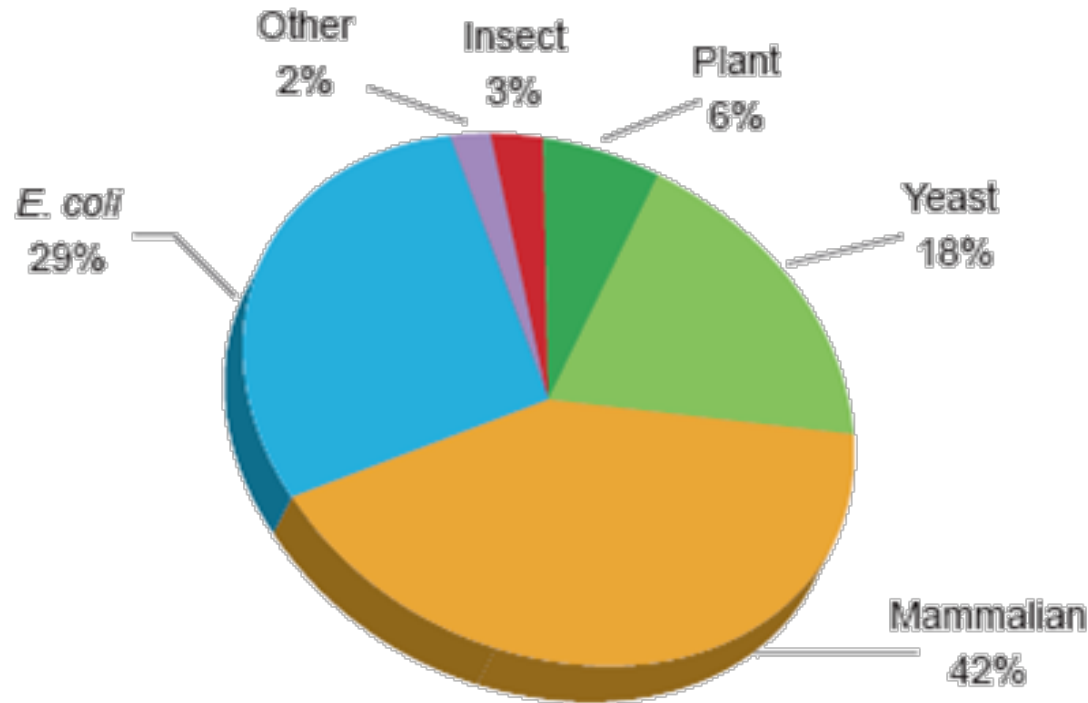
Stable expression



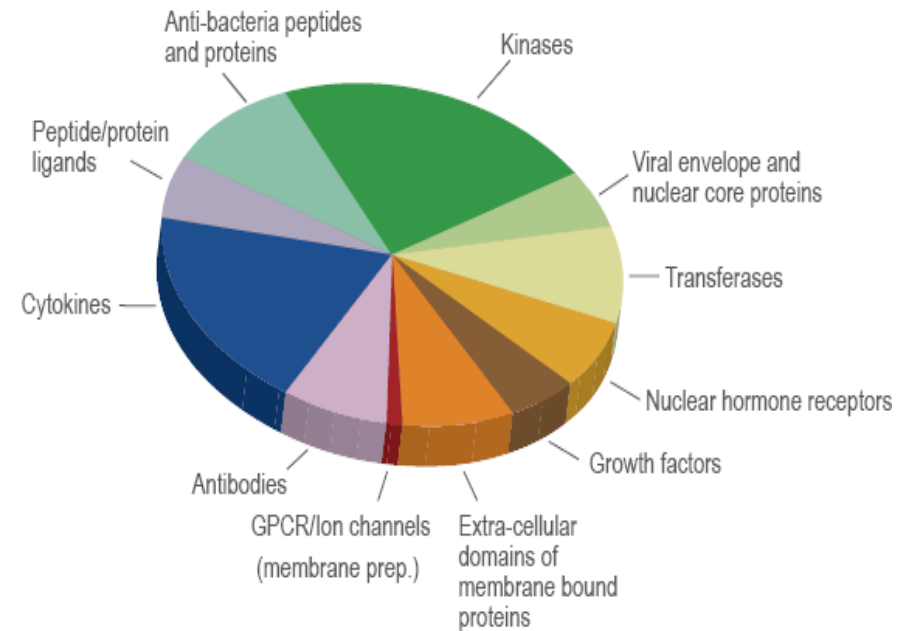
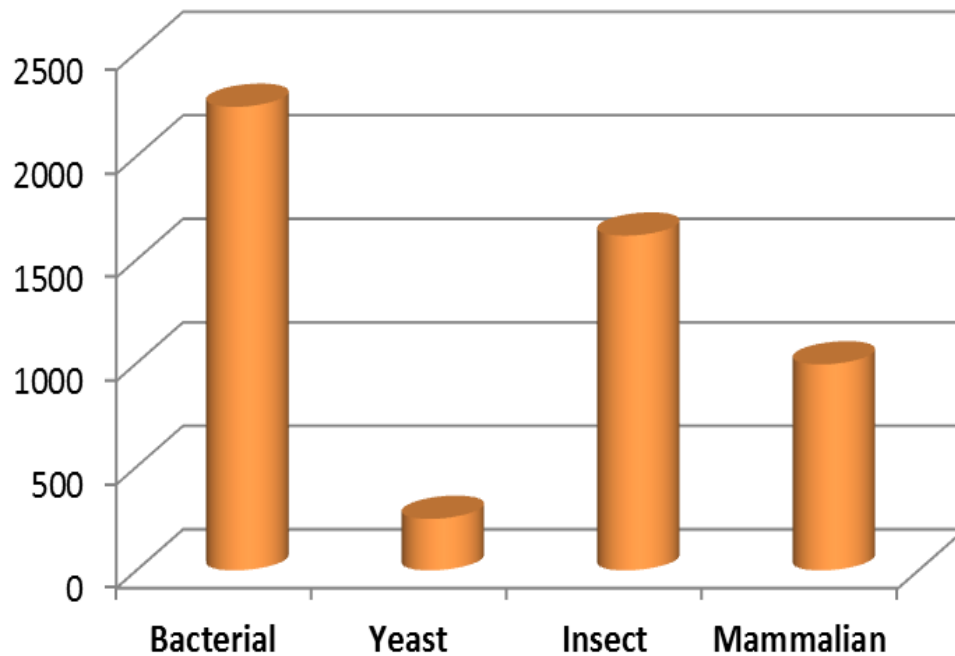
Performance of OptimumGene™



- ◆ **Over 500,000 sequences** have been optimized by GenScript in all major expression systems.



Performance of OptimumGene™



GenScript has delivered over **5,000** proteins in four expression systems. Statistics showed **95%** success rate for all protein projects.



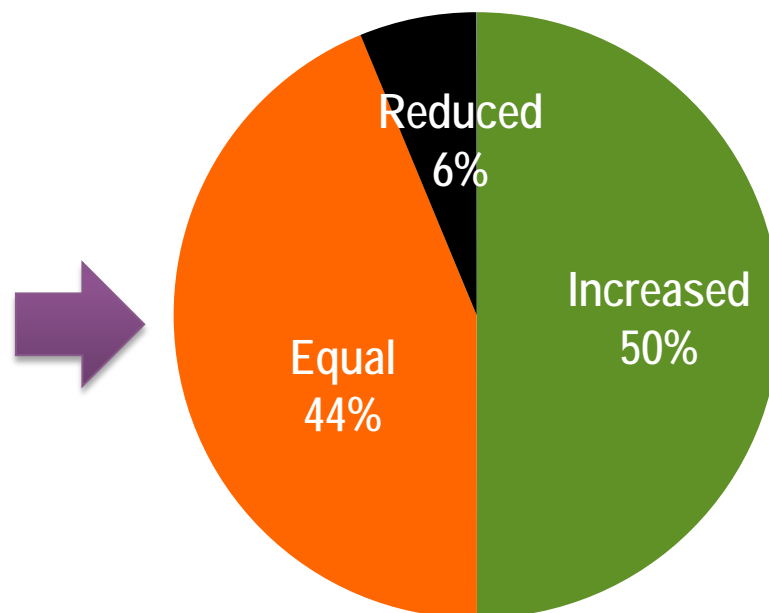
◆ 2015 Update for *E. coli* expression system

<i>Item</i>	<i>Opti-10</i>	<i>2015</i>
1	Genome codon table	High-productivity codon table
2	Global codon optimization	Global codon optimization & N-terminal codon bias

OptimumGene™ 2015 performance



#	Protein	Opti-10	2015	Note
1	PD_Capsid	2.3	3	+
2	ALAD-L-Apo	17.7	23.2	+
3	Ng22	0.9	1.2	+
4	α -Gliadin	6.32	9.3	+
5	Human IGF-1	1.8	5.6	+
6	Foxn1	1.05	7.25	+
7	OSEIL2	0	2	+
8	Mu1c	0	13.9	+
9	ApxII	20.4	18.4	=
10	OspA	9.7	10	=
11	Human cMyc Δ C	27.7	29.5	=
12	BRPF1BD	17.5	18.9	=
13	FGF19-Apo	4	4.1	=
14	PcrV_144-257	5.9	6.1	=
15	PBANKA_061260	0	0	=
16	Mouse FGF 6	3.5	2.1	-

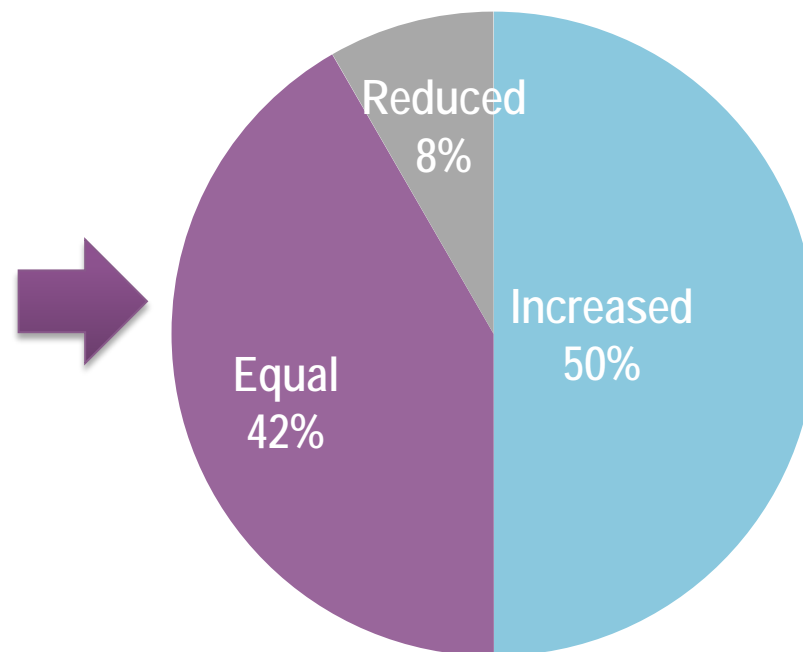


GenScript vs. Other Algorithms



Expression level (mg/L)

#	Gene	GenScript	Competitor	Note
1	<i>IGF-1</i>	5.6	5.8	=
2	<i>ALAD</i>	23.2	0	+
3	<i>BRPF1BD</i>	18.9	18.8	=
4	<i>cMyc</i>	29.5	30.9	=
5	<i>Ng22</i>	1.2	1.2	=
6	<i>Mu1c</i>	13.9	6.8	+
7	<i>PD_Capsid</i>	3	0.9	+
8	<i>Foxn1</i>	7.25	4.04	+
9	<i>ApxII</i>	18.4	9.65	+
10	<i>α-Gliadin</i>	9.3	4.91	+
11	<i>OspA</i>	10	10	=
12	<i>FGF 6</i>	2.1	7	-

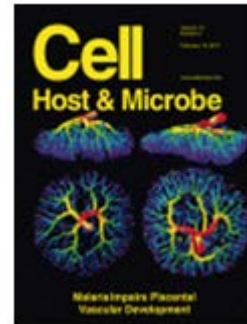


Hundreds of papers cite GenScript for codon-optimized gene synthesis



“Humanization and optimization of codon usage was performed (GenScript) owing to poor expression of the original zebrafish lyn in HEK293 cells.”

...The following genes were codon optimized and synthesized (GenScript):



“were generated in eukaryotic mycoplasma-free HEK-293 cells, using cDNAs optimized to fit eukaryotic codon usage (GenScript...”

“...Zebrafish codon optimized cerulean (**GenScript**, Piscataway, NJ, USA)...”



“...IFP1.4 gene was de novo synthesized by **GenScript** Company, based on the available protein sequence. The DNA sequence was **optimized with proprietary OptimumGene algorithm (GenScript)**...”

...The mangosteen stearyl-ACP thioesterase (GenBank accession AAB51523.1) was codon-optimized (**GenScript**, Piscataway, NJ)...



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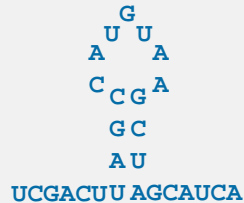
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Protein Expression in a Nutshell



RATE OF Protein Production

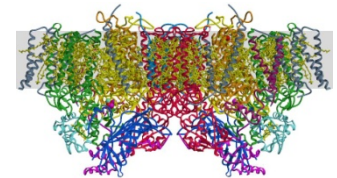
Transcription → Translation →



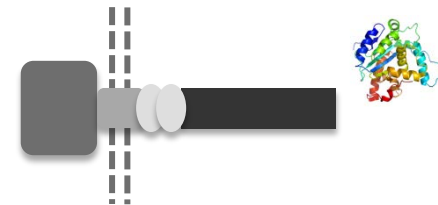
RATE OF Protein Folding



RATE OF Membrane Insertion

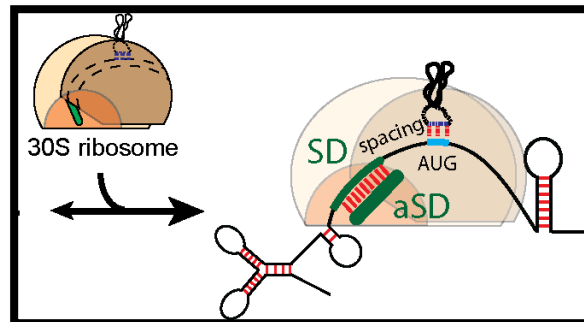


RATE OF Secretion

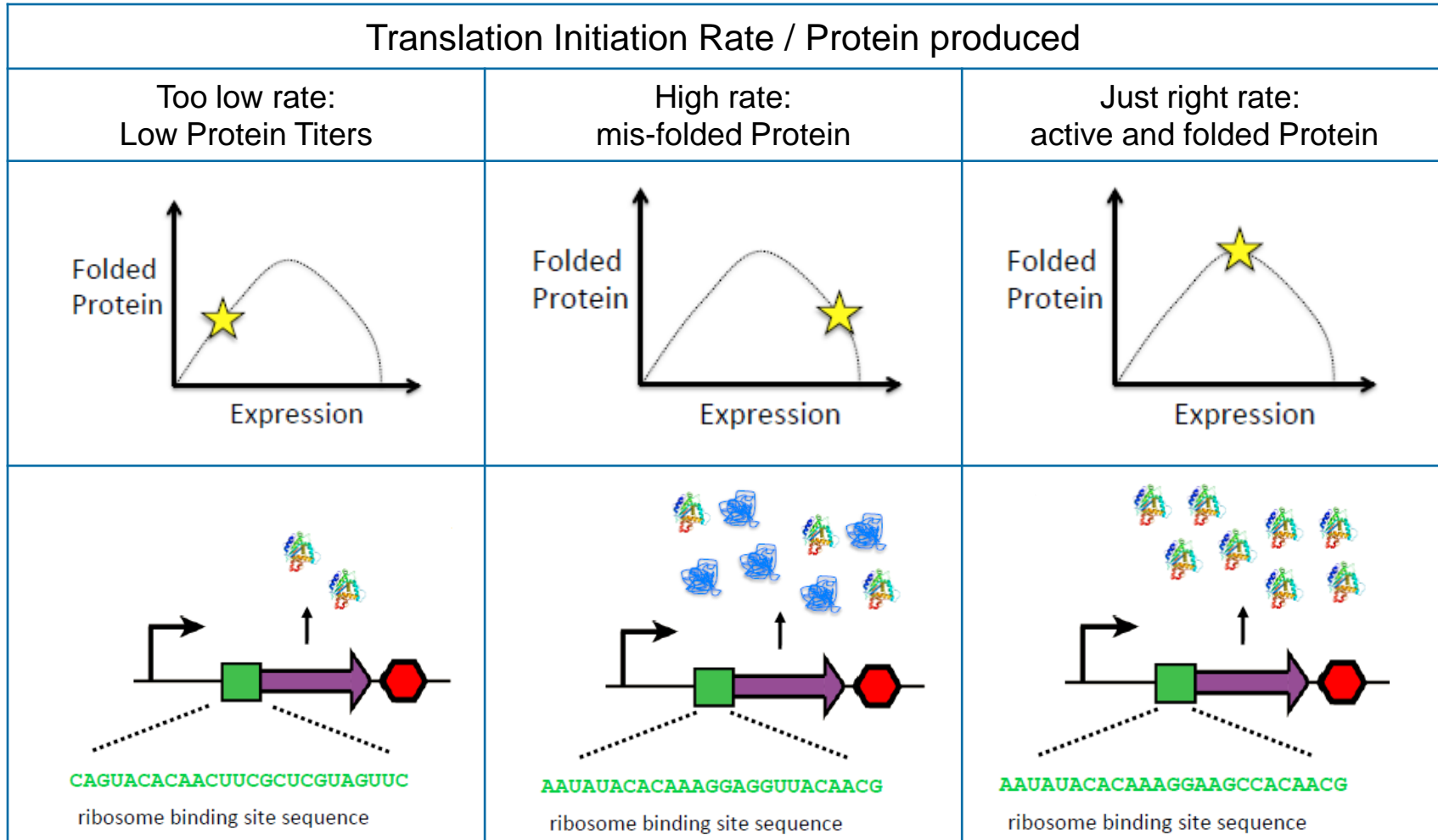


Rate-Limiting Step of Protein Production:

Translation Initiation



Maximizing Protein Titer: a balancing act



➤ RBS design can *slow down* translation for better solubility of *E. coli*-expressed proteins

Factors that Affect Translation Initiation



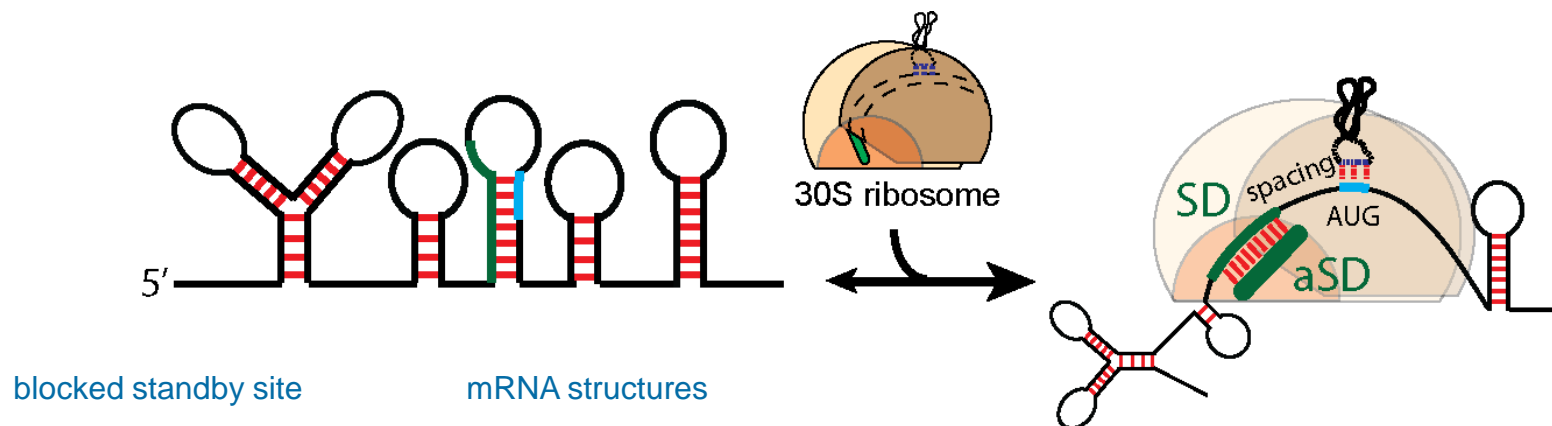
RBS sequence

CDS sequence

AUCCGAUAACUAGUCACACAGUAAAAUUUAGUUAUGACCACCUUUCACAAAGCAAGCGGAGUGCUUC
UUGUGCCGACUUACGAGCAUCUAGCGAGCAUCUAGCGACUACUGAC ... **UAA**

Molecular interactions controlling translation initiation

1. Hybridization between the mRNA and 3' end of the 16S rRNA @ the “Shine-Dalgarno”
2. The unfolding of mRNA structures that overlap with the ribosome's footprint
3. Hybridization between the start codon and tRNA^{fMet}
4. Ribosome stretching or compression, due to long or short spacer regions
5. mRNA structures in standby sites that block ribosome binding
6. The time-scale of RNA folding kinetics vs. ribosome assembly kinetics



Factors that Affect Translation Initiation



RBS sequence

AUCCGAUAACUAGUCACACAGUAAAAUUUAGUU AUGACCACCUUUCACAAAGCAAGCGGAGUGCUUC
UUGUGCCGACUUACGAGCAUCUAGCGAGCAUCUAGCGACUACUGAC . . . UAA

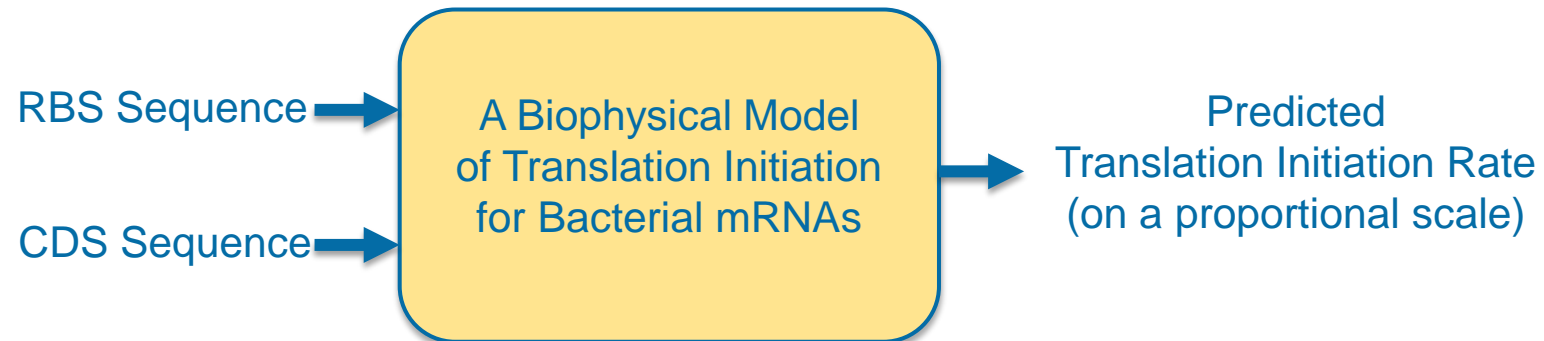
CDS sequence

*Let's insert a consensus Shine-Dalgarno sequence for maximum mRNA-rRNA hybridization
Uh Oh! We created a new mRNA structure that will inhibit translation rate.*



AUCCGAUAACUAGUCACACAUAAGGAGGUAGUU AUGACCACCUUUCACAAAGCAAGCGGAGUGCUUCU
UGUGCCGACUUACGAGCAUCUAGCGAGCAUCUAGCGACUACUGAC . . . UAA

***Many overlapping causes = difficult to design RBS sequences “by eye”
Need to use a Quantitative Model that Calculates Causes & Predicts their Effect***



Automated Design to Optimize Expression



Objective: design an RBS sequence
to decrease translation initiation of a specific protein by 20-fold

Your initial sequence

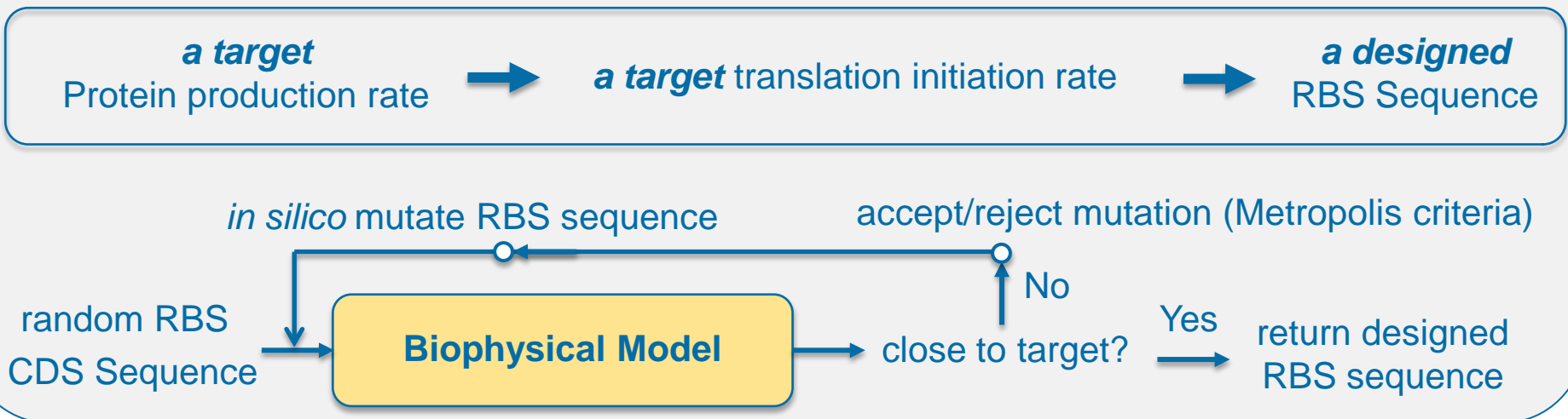
RBS sequence

CDS sequence

AUCCGAUAACUAGUCACACAGUAAAAUUUAGUU**AUG**ACCACCUUUCACAAAGCAAGCGGAGUGCUUC
UUGUGCCGACUUACGAGCAUCUAGCGAGCAUCUAGCGACUACUGAC ... **UAA**

How many choices? 35 nt 5' UTR ... $4^{35} = 1.1 \times 10^{21}$

Computational Optimization



Automated Design to Optimize Expression



Objective: design an RBS sequence
to decrease translation initiation of a specific protein by 20-fold

RBS sequence

CDS sequence

AUCCGAUAACUAGUCACACAGUAAAAUUUAGUU AUGACCACCUUUCACAAAGCAAGCGGAGUGCUUC
UUGUGCCGACUUACGAGCAUCUAGCGAGCAUCUAGCGACUACUGAC ... UAA



RBS Calculator

predict translation init. rate



400,000 au

CGAACCGCUAUUCUAGAUAGUUCAAAAACAGAAC

100 au

UAUGCCUUCACAUUCACCAUUCAGAGACCGGUCG

300 au

AUCCGAUAACUAGUCUUUAAGUAAAAUUUAGUU

3 000 au

UACCACUAAAACUAACCUAACGAGUAGGUUAUAA

10 000 au

AAA AUUUCAUAAACAAGGUCGGGGGAUAUCAAG

20 000 au

UAUCAUUAUAUUCAUUCGAAUAAGGGGAUCUACU

100 000 au



$400,000 \text{ au} / 20 = 20\,000 \text{ au}$

design a
new RBS



The Ribosome Binding Site Calculator



RBS Sequence



CDS Sequence

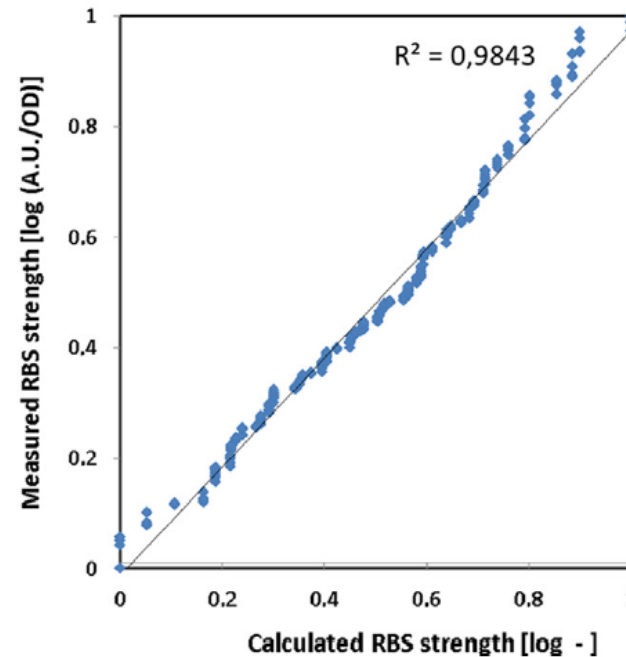
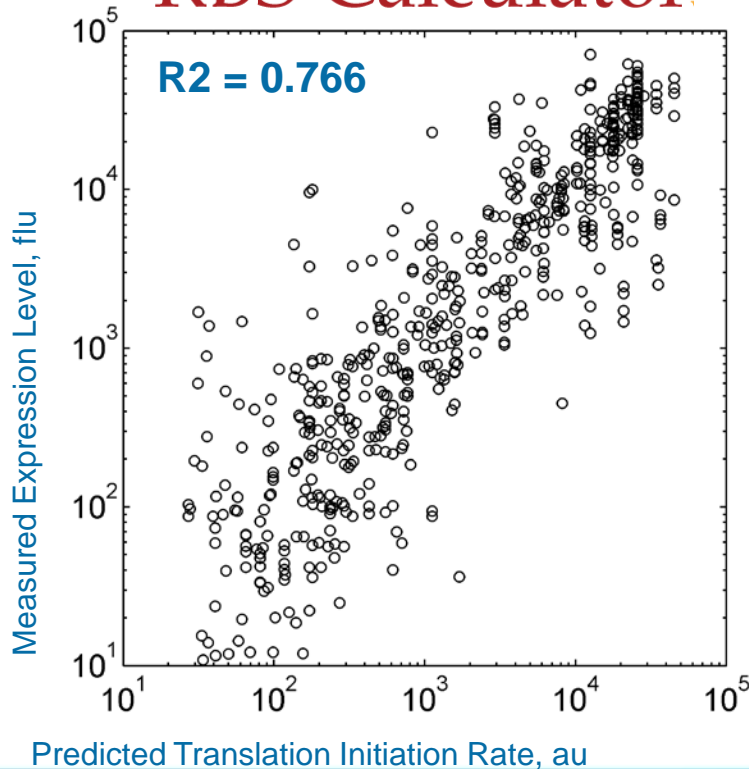


A Biophysical Model
of Translation Initiation
for Bacterial mRNAs



Predicted
Translation Initiation Rate
(on a proportional scale)

RBS Calculator



Coussement et. al, *Metabolic Engineering*, 2014
Salis et. al., *Nature Biotechnology*, 2009
Farasat et. al., *Molecular Systems Biology*, 2014

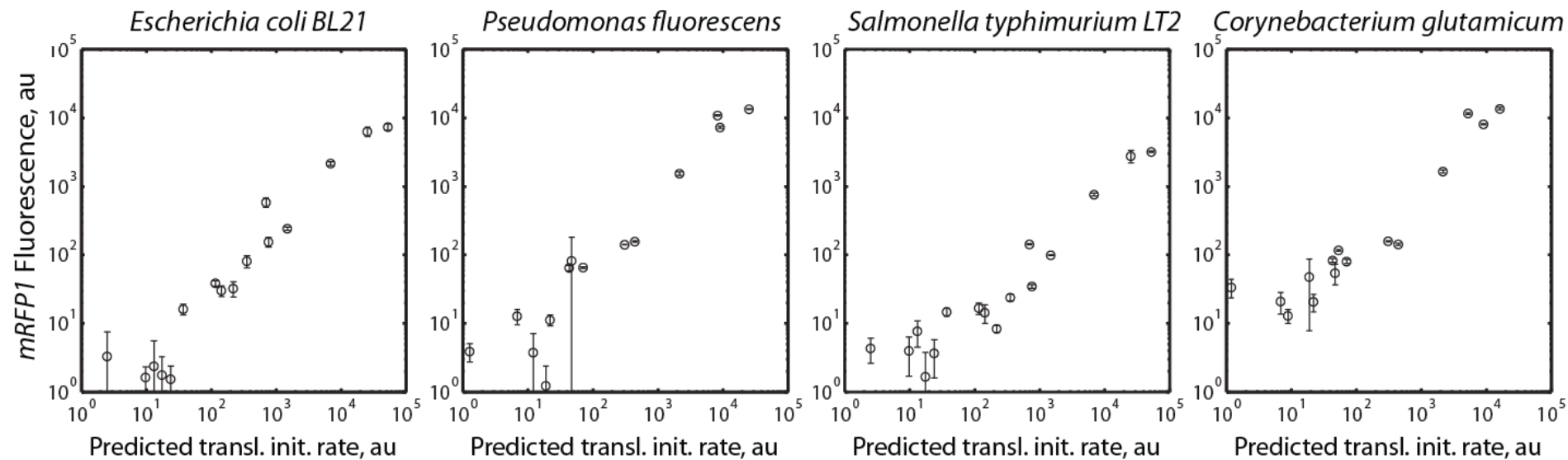
The RBS Calculator in Different Hosts



*Different organisms,
same RNA biophysics*

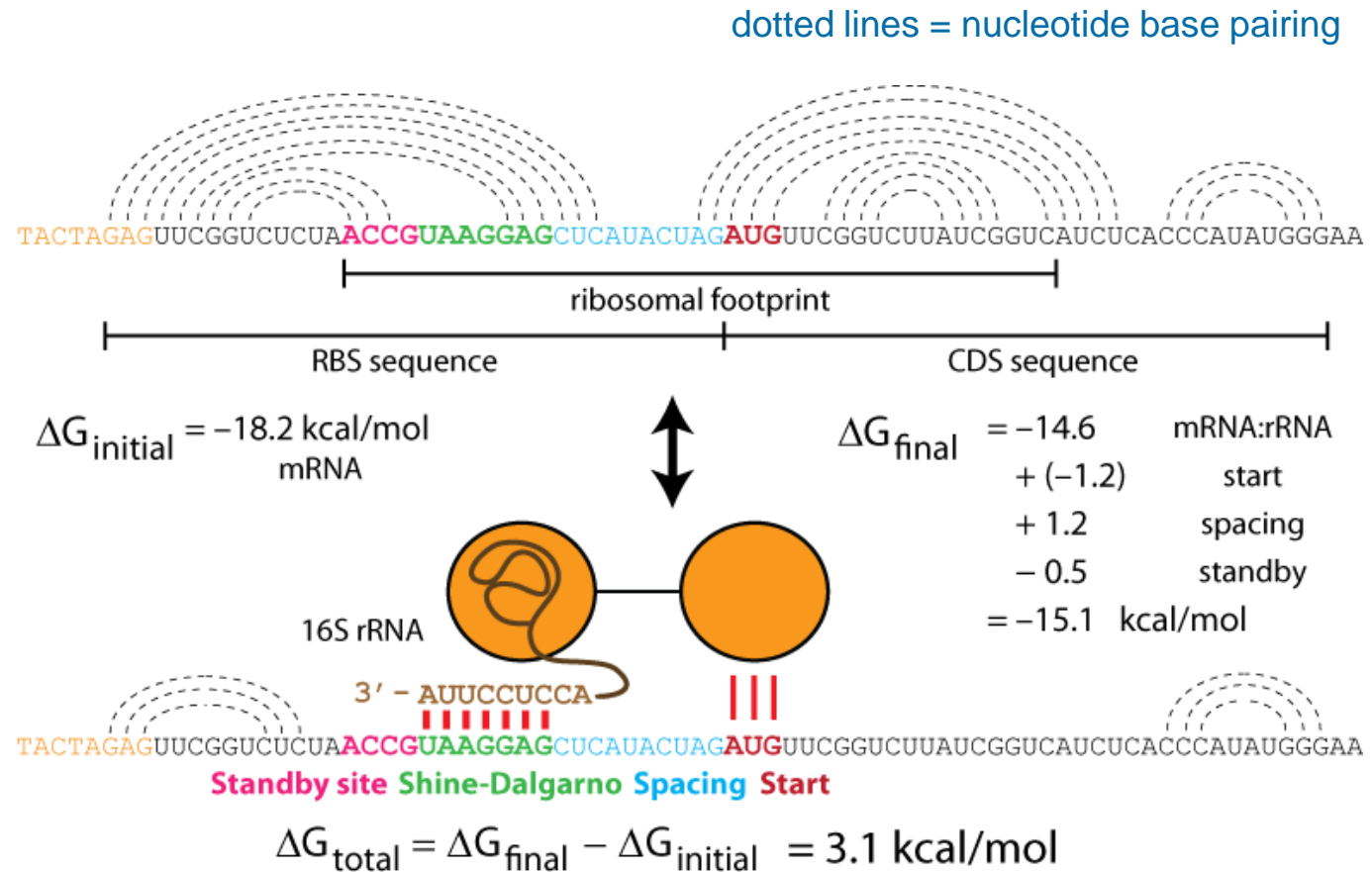
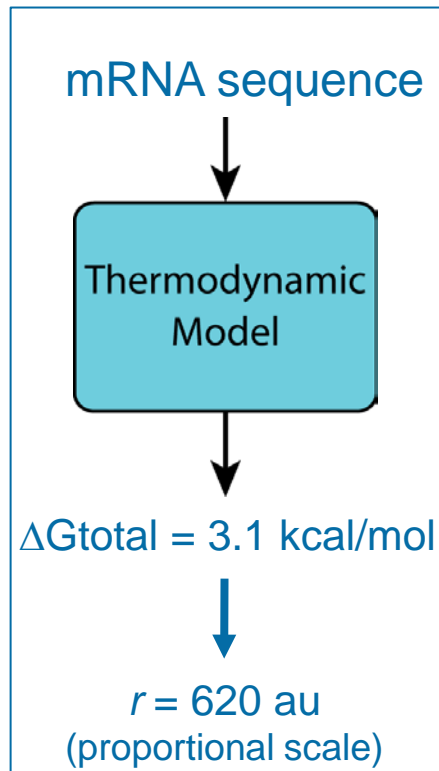


*Slightly different
ribosomes*



Farasat et. al., *Molecular Systems Biology*, 2014

How does the RBS Calculator Work?

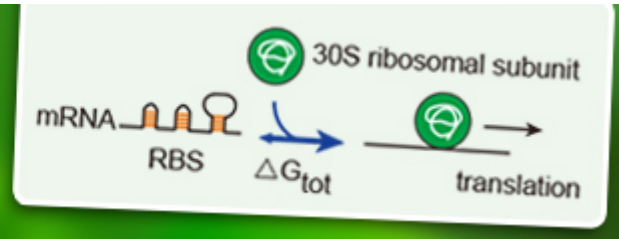


Ribosome Binding Site Design

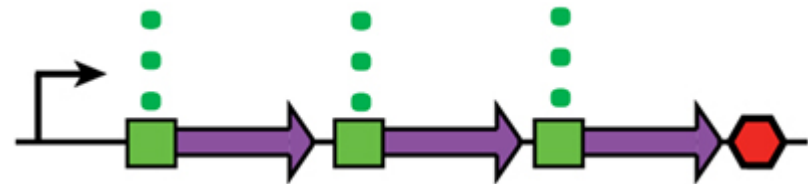
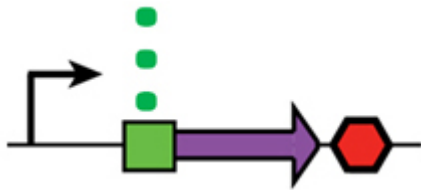


RBS Design

- Tunable control of the translation initiation rate
- Biophysics-based design of ribosome binding site



- ◆ Sequence-dependent; design RBS *after* codon optimization
- ◆ Useful for single proteins or multi-enzyme pathways



Extremely Low ~ Low	Medium	High	Extremely High
1~500 au	1,000~ 10,000 au	10,000~100,000 au	100,000~200,000 au
yield low protein titers	Suitable for trans-membrane protein or protein with enzymatic activity that inhibits cellular metabolism.	For non-cytotoxic protein, 100,000 au TIR will produce a large amount of soluble protein. Rich media is required	For inert and fast folding protein, extremely high TIRs will express a huge amount of protein. Rich media is required



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Expression Vector Components



Goal	Component
1. Insert cargo into the plasmid and verify the insert sequence accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•MCS – restriction sites OR recombination regions5' and 3' Primer sites for sequence verification
2. Insert plasmid into cells, enable the plasmid to replicate inside the host, & select for cells carrying the plasmid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Backbone compatible with cloning method• Origin of replication• Selection marker and/or screening marker
3. Transcribe mRNA from the plasmid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Promoter (constitutive or inducible) operator, terminator
4. Translate mRNA into protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Ribosome Binding Site, start codon, stop codon
5. Promote proper folding of nascent protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•co-expression of chaperones•Solubilization tags•custom-designed synthetic RBS•Codon-optimized ORF
6. Detect or Purify target protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Epitope tags (His)•reporters (GFP)

Transcriptional Promoters



Host	Commonly Used Promoters
Bacteria	Lac, T7, araBAD
Yeast	GAL4, PGK, ADH1, ADE2, TRP1
Mammalian	Constitutive: CMV, SV40, EF1a, CAG Inducible: Tet <i>Tissue-specific for in vivo work: varied</i>

Epitope Tags / Fusion Proteins



Goal	Commonly Use Tag
Detect target protein (common Ab epitope tags)	FLAG (DYKDDDDK) HA (YPYDVPDYA)
Purify target protein (affinity tags)	His6 glutathione-S-transferase (GST)
Improve solubility of target protein	maltose-binding protein (MBP) glutathione-S-transferase (GST)

Tags can be removed at cleavage sites place between target ORF and tag:

Enzyme	Cleavage site
Thrombin	Leu-Val-Pro-Arg-Gly-Ser
Enterokinase	Asp-Asp-Asp-Asp-Lys
Factor Xa	Ile-Glu/Asp-Gly-Arg
TEV	Glu-Asn-Leu-Tyr-Phe-Gln-Gly

Learn More about Expression Vectors



<http://www.genscript.com/webinars.html>

Expression vectors: how to choose, or customize, vectors for gene & protein expression

Do you make new DNA constructs only using the old expression vectors you're most familiar with? This webinar will help you make your experimental design more efficient and powerful by learning how to select or design an expression vector that is optimized for your experiments. We will walk through how to read a plasmid map and what key features to look for in an expression vector depending on your research goal. Using case studies from published literature, we'll discuss why and how you might want to make custom changes to elements already included in commercial available vectors (e.g. RBS or tags). Along with handy reference guides for popular vectors used in different eukaryotic and prokaryotic species, this webinar will introduce you to GenScript's gene synthesis and cloning services that can help you get expression-ready clones most efficiently to accelerate your research.

On Demand

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How to optimize protein expression



Remember: optimize \neq maximize; more is not always better!

- ◆ Optimize the Expression Vector
 - Choose/Reorder ORI, promoter, solubilization tags
 - RBS must be customized for each cargo
- ◆ Optimize the Cargo (insert DNA)
 - codon optimization
- ◆ Optimize the Host
 - Platform (species) and strain
- ◆ Optimize your Methods
 - transformation, selection, growth, induction, purification



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Related GenScript Webinars



Clone less, know more: efficient expression optimization of proteins and pathways using the RBS calculator



Presented by: Prof. Howard Salis, Penn State University

On Demand

[View now](#)

Codon optimization: Why & how to design DNA sequences for optimal soluble protein expression



Presented by: Rachel Speer, Ph.D.
Originally aired October 29, 2014

On Demand

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Optimizing conditions for recombinant soluble protein production in *E. coli*



Presented by: Keshav Vasanthavada
Originally aired May 8th and June 24th, 2014

On Demand

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Recombinant protein expression & purification: challenges and solutions



Presented by: Liyan Pang, Ph.D.
Originally aired June 11th and June 12th, 2014

On Demand

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Strategies to Promote Proper Folding



- ◆ Folding may be improved by chaperone co-expression

Chaperone co-expression strategies for recombinant soluble protein production in *E. coli*

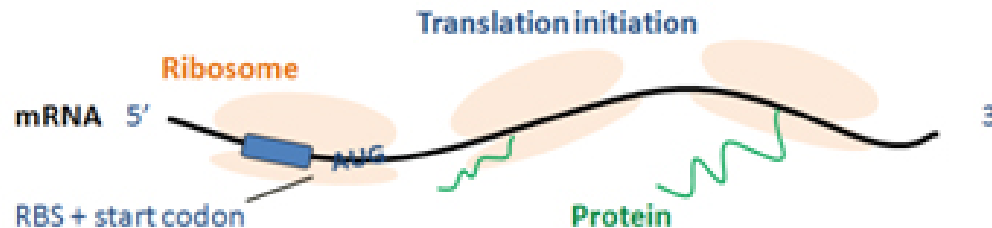


Presented by: Bo Wu, Ph.D, Senior Scientist, GenScript

On Demand

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- ◆ Folding is coupled with translation initiation and elongation.



- Initiation: RBS Calculator
- Elongation: codon choice (“optimization” or “de-optimization”)

GenScript Toolkit to Optimize Expression

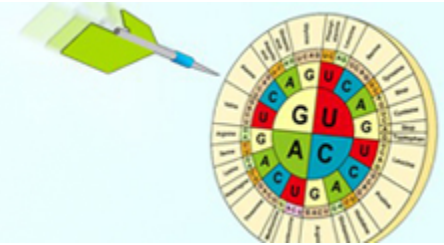


- **Codon optimization:** boost transcription & translation in any host

OptimumGene™ -Codon Optimization

Significant increase in protein expression

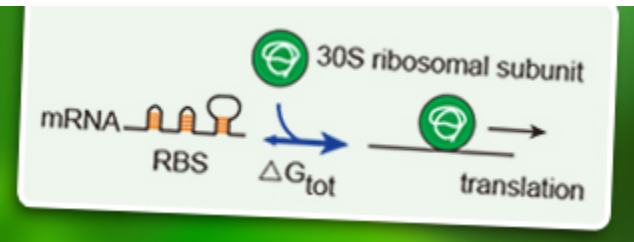
- Fruitful results in even the most difficult sequences
- Comprehensive usage tables for optimization in any host
- DNA vaccine design



- **RBS design:** tune translation in prokaryotes

RBS Design

- Tunable control of the translation initiation rate
- Biophysics-based design of ribosome binding site



- **Expression Vector Selection**

Express Cloning

- \$49 and 2 day turnaround
- Choose from over 150 FREE vectors
- Save time with expression-ready gene constructs



Gene Synthesis to create any custom insert



Recommended Services for your needs:	Low Price	Fast Turnaround	High-Volume	Long Genes
Custom Gene Synthesis Cat No. SC1010	✓ \$0.35/bp	✓ 8+ business days	No min / max	≤8 kb
Rush Gene Synthesis Cat No. SC1575	Request a quote	✓ 4+ business days	No min / max	≤2 kb
GenPlus™ High-Throughput Gene Synthesis Cat No. SC 1645	✓ \$0.23/bp	10+ business days	✓ ≥25 genes	✓ ≤10 kb
GenPlus™ Economy Gene Synthesis Cat No. SC1681	✓ \$0.23/bp	25+ business days	No min / max	✓ ≤10 kb
GenBrick™ Synthesis Cat No. SC1584	\$0.45/bp	23 business days	No min / max	✓ 8 - 15kb or more

Express Cloning – free vectors!

\$49, 2-day cloning



Mammalian

pcDNA3.1(+)
pcDNA3.1(-)
pcDNA3.1(+)_myc-His A
pcDNA3.1(+)_myc-His B
pcDNA3.1(+)_myc-His C
pcDNA3.1(-)_myc-His A
pcDNA3.1(-)_myc-His B
pcDNA3.1(-)_myc-His C
pCI-Neo
pcDNA3.1+C-DYK
pcDNA3.1+C-HA
pcDNA3.1+C-6His
pcDNA3.1+C-Myc
pcDNA3.1+N-DYK
pcDNA3.1+N-HA
pcDNA3.1+N-6His
pcDNA3.1+N-Myc
pcDNA3.1+N-GST(Thrombin)
pcDNA3.1+N-GST(TEV)
pcDNA3.1/Hygro(+)
pcDNA3.1/Hygro(-)
pcDNA3.1/Zeo (+)
pcDNA3.1/Zeo (-)
pCMV-3Tag-1a
pCMV-3Tag-2a
pCMV-3Tag-3a
pCMV-3Tag-4a
pcDNA3.1-C-eGFP
pcDNA3.1-N-eGFP
pcDNA3.1-P2A-eGFP
pcDNA3.1-P2A
pcDNA3.1+N-DYK-P2A
pcDNA3.1+C-DYK-P2A
pCMV-3Tag-1a-P2A
pCMV-3Tag-3a-P2A

Yeast

pAO815
pPIC 3.5k
pPIC9
pPIC9K
pPICZA
pPICZB
pPICZC
pPICZalphaA
pPICZalphaB
pPICZalphaC
pESC-TRP
pESC-URA
pESC-HIS
pESC-LEU

Baculovirus/Insect

pBacPAK8
pBacPAK9
pAcG2T
pAcHLT A
pAcHLT B
pAcHLT C
pAcGHLT A
pAcGHLT B
pAcGHLT C
pAcSG2
pBAC-1
pFastBac1
pFastBacHT-A
pFastBacHT-B
pFastBacHT-C
pFastBac-Dual

Bacterial

pBluescript II KS(-)
pBluescript II KS(+)
pBluescript II SK(-)
pBluescript II SK(+)
pET-3a
pET-3b
pET-3c
pET-3d
pET-9a
pET-11a
pET-11b
pET-11c
pET-11d
pET-14b
pET-15b
pET-16b
pET-17b
pET-19b
pET-20b(+)
pET-21a(+)
pET-21b(+)
pET-21d(+)
pET-22b(+)
pET-23a(+)
pET-24a(+)
pET-24b(+)
pET-24c(+)
pET-24d(+)
pET-25b(+)
pET-26b(+)

pET-27b(+)
pET-28a(+)
pET-28b(+)
pET-28c(+)
pET-29a(+)
pET-29b(+)
pET-29c(+)
PET-30a(+)
PET-30b(+)
PET-30c(+)
PET-31b(+)
pET-32a(+)
pET-32b(+)
pET-41a(+)
pET-41b(+)
pET-41c(+)
pET-42a(+)
pET-42b(+)
pET-42c(+)
pET-43.1a(+)
pET-43.1b(+)
pET-45b(+)
pET-50b(+)
pET-51b(+)
pET-52b(+)
pGEX-2TK
pGEX-4T-1
pGEX-4T-2
pGEX-4T-3
pGEX-5X-1
pGEX-5X-2
pGEX-5X-3
pGEX-6P-1
pGEX-6P-2
pGEX-6P-3

pMAL-c4x
pMAL-c5E
pMAL-c5x
pMAL-p5E
pMAL-p5g
pMAL-p5x
pQE-1
pQE-60
pGS-21a
pETDuet-1
pCDFDuet-1
pRSFDuet-1
pCOLADuet-1
pGEX-4T-1-H(RBS)
pGEX-4T-1-M(RBS)
pGEX-5X-1-H(RBS)
pGEX-5X-1-M(RBS)
pGEX-6P-1-H(RBS)
pGEX-6P-1-M(RBS)
pMAL-c4x-1-H(RBS)
pMAL-c4x-1-M(RBS)

Cloning & Mutagenesis Services



Express Cloning

- starting from **\$49** and **2 day turnaround**
- save time with expression-ready gene constructs



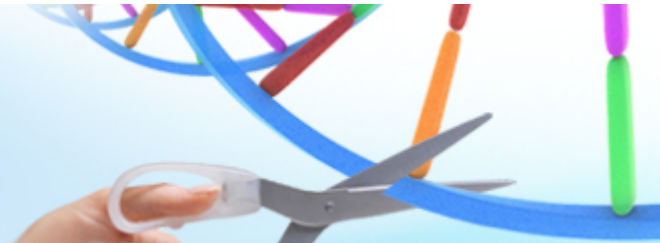
VectorArk

- Secure, free storage of vector plasmids and data
- **\$49**, 5-day cloning for your archived vectors



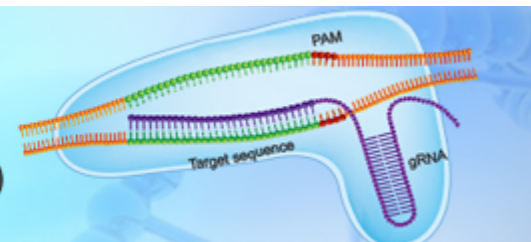
Express Mutagenesis

- starts at **\$99/mutation**
- **5** business days
- **100%** sequence accuracy guaranteed

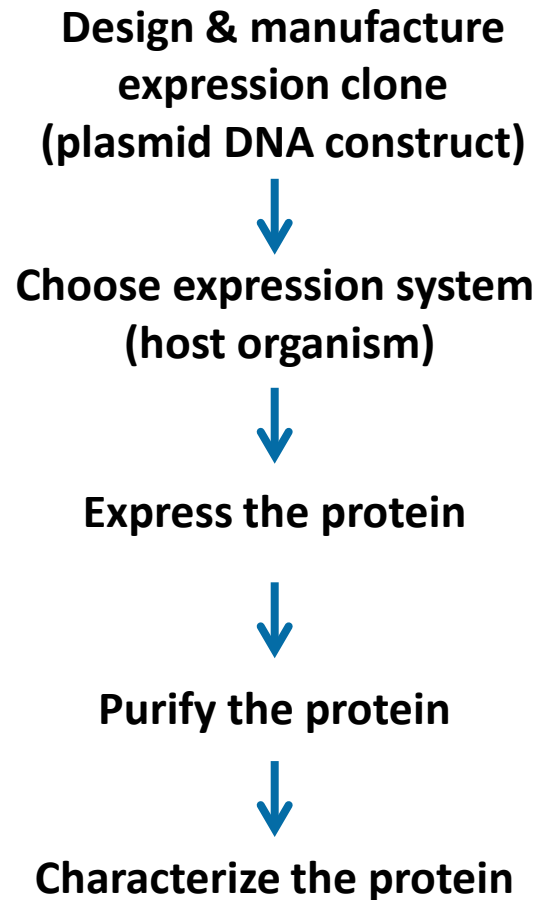


GenCRISPR™ gRNA constructs

- gRNA constructs designed by Zhang lab at Broad
- all-in-one vectors for KO, KI, or transcriptional activation (SAM)



GenScript Toolkit For Optimizing Protein Expression



Codon Optimization
RBS Design

Gene Synthesis
Mutagenesis
Cloning

**CRISPR gRNA & Cas9 expression constructs*

PROtential™ protein expression evaluation service

BacPower™
YeastHIGH™
MamPower™
InsectPower™

FragPower™
Recombinant Antibody

FoldArt™ Refolding
ToxinEraser™ Endotoxin Removal

Protein Characterization Services

GenScript – The most cited biology CRO



Gene Services



Peptide Services



Protein Services



Antibody Services



Discovery Biology
Services



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