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2	Supplement to
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4	Metabolic engineering of Corynebacterium glutamicum for
5	high-level ectoine production - design, combinatorial
6	assembly and implementation of a transcriptionally balanced
7	biosynthetic pathway
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9	Gideon Gießelmann ¹ , Demian Dietrich ¹ , Lukas Jungmann ¹ Michael Kohlstedt ¹ , Eun
10	Jung Jeon ² , Sung Sun Yim ² , Frederik Sommer ³ , David Zimmer ³ , Timo Mühlhaus ³ ,
11	Michael Schroda ³ , Ki Jun Jeong ² , Judith Becker ¹ , and Christoph Wittmann ^{1*}
12	
13	
14	¹ Institute of Systems Biotechnology, Saarland University, Germany
15	² Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, KAIST, Republic of Korea
16	³ Department of Molecular Biotechnology and Systems Biology, TU Kaiserslautern,
17	Germany
18	
19	
20	
21	*Corresponding address: Campus A1.5, 66123 Saarbrücken, Germany,
22	christoph.wittmann@uni-saarland.de, Phone: +49-681-302-71970, FAX: +49-681-
23	302-71972.
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29 Strains and plasmids

The strains and plasmids are listed in **Supplementary Table S1**. Corynebacterium 30 glutamicum ATCC 13032 lysC^{fbr} was obtained from previous work.^[1] It contains a 31 32 feedback-resistant variant of aspartokinase (Cgl0251). Escherichia coli DH5a, E. coli 33 NM522 (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA, USA), and E. coli XL1-Blue (Stratagene, La Jolla, CA, USA) were used for cloning.^[2] All strains were stored as cryostocks in 60% 34 glycerol at -80 °C. The integrative plasmid pClik int sacB^[3, 4] and the episomal 35 plasmids pClik 5a MCS,^[5] pCGH36A,^[38] and PCES208^[38] have been previously 36 37 described. The codon-optimized ectABC genes from Pseudomonas stutzeri under 38 control of the *tuf* promoter were taken from previous work.^[6]

39

40 Recombinant DNA work in C. glutamicum

41 DNA fragments were amplified by PCR (Phusion Flash PCR Master Mix, Thermo 42 Fischer Scientific, St. Leon-Roth, Germany) using sequence-specific primers 43 (Supplementary Table S2). For heterologous expression of the previously developed 44 ectoine cluster,^[6] pClik 5a MCS was linearized using the restriction enzyme Ndel 45 (FastDigest, Thermo Fischer Scientific), followed by in vitro assembly with the codonoptimized construct *P_{tuf} ectABC*.^[7] After amplification in *E. coli* DH5α, methylation in 46 47 E. coli NM522, and isolation (QIAprep Spin MiniPrep Kit, Quiagen, Hilden, Germany), 48 the functional plasmid was transformed into C. glutamicum using electroporation.^[8] 49 Genomic deletion of lysE, which encodes the L-lysine exporter (Cgl1262), was 50 performed as described previously.^[9] The genetic modifications were validated by 51 PCR and sequencing (GATC Biotech AG, Konstanz, Germany).

52

53 **Construction and expression of a combinatorial ectoine pathway**

A combinatorial plasmid library was constructed and assembled in the shuttle vector
 pCES208 (*E. coli – C. glutamicum*). All primers used for this purpose are listed in
 Supplementary Table S5. Each library construct was transformed into *E. coli* XL1-

57 Blue (Stratagene, La Jolla, CA, USA) using electroporation. First, we constructed a 58 combinatorial library of ectA using 19 synthetic promoters (Supplementary Table 59 S3),^[10] three bicistronic designed elements (BCDs, Supplementary Table S4), namely, BCD2, BCD8 and BCD21,^[11] and the transcriptional terminator *rrnBT1T*2.^[12] 60 61 The selected promoters differed in relative expression strength: H36 (100%), H5 62 (69%), H3 (68%), H34 (68%), H30 (67%), H28 (65%), H72 (62%), H4 (60%), H17 63 (58%), I29 (48%), I9 (45%), I12 (40%), I16 (36%), I15 (35%), I64 (33%), I51 (31%), L10 (18%), L80 (16%), and L26 (13%).^[10] Similarly, the BCD elements included a 64 strong (BCD2, 100%), a medium (BCD21, 23%), and a weak variant (BCD8, 8%).^[12] 65 For library construction, the codon-optimized ectA gene^[6] was amplified by PCR with 66 67 the primers BCD-F-BamHI, EctA-R and either BCD2-EctA-F, BCD8-EctA-F or BCD21-EctA-F (Supplementary Table S5). All PCR products were pooled, digested 68 69 with BamHI and NotI, and cloned into pCGH36A containing the synthetic promoter P_{H36} and *rrnBT1T2*.^[11] For the promoter library, 19 synthetic promoters^[10] were cloned 70 71 into Kpnl and BamHl sites of pCGH36A-EctA, yielding pCGH36A-ectA-Lib. In the 72 same way, the combinatorial libraries for ectB and ectC, i.e., pCGH36A-ectB-Lib and 73 pCGH36A-ectC-Lib were constructed. Next, each ectA, ectB, and ectC module was 74 assembled in the pCES208 shuttle vector as follows. First, the ectA module containing 75 promoters-BCDs-ectA-rrnBT1T2 was amplified from pCGH36A-ectA-Lib by PCR 76 using the primers Xhol-EctA-F and EctA-R-Notl. The PCR products were digested 77 with Xhol and Xbal and cloned into the Sall and Spel sites of pCES208, yielding 78 pEctA-Lib. Next, for the assembly of the ectA and ectB modules, the ectB module was 79 amplified from pCGH36A-ectB-Lib by PCR with the primers XhoI-EctB-F and EctB-80 Sall-Xbal-R. The PCR products were digested with Xhol and Xbal and cloned into the 81 Sall and Xbal sites of the pEctA library, yielding pEctAB-Lib. Finally, the ectC module 82 was amplified from pCGH36A-ectC-Lib by PCR with the primers Sall-EctC-F and 83 EctC-Xbal-R, and the PCR products were cloned into the Sall and Xbal sites of the 84 pEctAB library, yielding pEctABC-Lib (Supplementary Fig. S1). The plasmid library

85 was transformed into *C. glutamicum* using electroporation.^[8] The genetic
86 modifications were validated by sequencing (GATC Biotech AG, Konstanz,
87 Germany).

88

89 Media and cultivation

The first preculture was conducted in liquid BHI medium (37 g L⁻¹ Becton Dickson, 90 91 Heidelberg, Germany). The second preculture and the main culture were grown in 92 minimal medium containing the following per liter: 10 g glucose, 15 g $(NH_4)_2SO_4$, 1 g 93 NaCl, 0.2 g MgSO₄·7H₂O, 55 mg CaCl₂, 20 mg FeSO₄·7H₂O, 0.5 mg biotin, 1 mg 94 thiamin HCI, 1 mg calcium pantothenate, 100 mL buffer solution (2 M potassium 95 phosphate, pH 7.8), 10 mL trace element solution (200 mg L⁻¹ FeCl₃·6H₂O, 200 mg L⁻¹ 96 ¹ MnSO₄·H₂O, 50 mg L⁻¹ ZnSO₄·7H₂O, 20 mg L⁻¹ CuC·2H₂O, 20 mg L⁻¹ 97 Na₂B₄O₇·10H₂O, 10 mg L⁻¹ (NH₄)₆Mo₇O₂₄·4H₂O, adjusted to pH 1 with HCl), and 1 mL 98 chelating agent solution (30 mg of 3.4-dihydroxybenzoic acid with 50 µL of 6 M 99 NaOH). All solutions were sterilized by autoclaving or sterile filtration. Antibiotics were 100 added from filter-sterilized stocks to final concentrations of 50 mg mL⁻¹ kanamycin or 101 12.5 mg mL⁻¹ tetracycline when needed. Cultivations were generally carried out at 30 102 °C. After 24 h of incubation on BHI agar, a single colony was picked to inoculate the 103 first preculture in liquid BHI medium (baffled shake flasks with 10% filling volume) and 104 incubated for 10 h in an orbital shaker at 230 rpm (Multitron, Infors AG, Bottmingen, 105 Switzerland). Cells from the first preculture were harvested by centrifugation (4 min, 106 8800 xg, 30 °C), washed twice with medium, and used to inoculate the second 107 preculture, which was harvested during the exponential growth phase to inoculate the 108 main culture as described above. All cultures were conducted in triplicate.

109

110 High-throughput screening of transformants

Cells were cultivated in a microbioreactor with online optical density measurement
(BioLector 1, m2plabs, Baesweiler, Germany) using 48-well flower plates (m2plabs,

Baesweiler, Germany). Each well was filled with 500 μL of minimal glucose medium
(see above). The incubations were conducted at 1,300 rpm, 30 °C and 85% humidity.

115

116 Fed-batch production in stirred tank bioreactors

117 The fed-batch production of ectoine was conducted in 1 L laboratory-scale bioreactors 118 (SR0700ODLS, DASGIP AG, Jülich, Germany) controlled by process control software 119 (DASGIP AG, Jülich). The initial batch medium (300 mL) contained the following per 120 liter: 100 g glucose, 72.4 g sugar cane molasses (Hansa Melasse, Bremen, 121 Germany), 35 g yeast extract (Difco, Becton Dickinson), 20 g (NH₄)₂SO₄, 100 mg 122 MqSO₄, 11 mg FeSO₄·7H₂O, 10 mg citrate, 250 µL H₃PO₄ (85%), 60 mg Ca-123 pantothenate, 18 mg nicotinamide, 15 mg thiamin HCl, 9 mg biotin, and 200 mg 124 Antifoam 204 (Sigma-Aldrich, Taufkirchen, Germany). The molasses contained 0.2% 125 NaCl, according to the supplier. After the initial glucose concentration had dropped 126 below 15 g L⁻¹, feeding was initiated. The feed was added pulsewise to keep the 127 glucose level above 10 g L⁻¹. The feed solution contained the following per liter: 670 128 g glucose, 162.5 g sugar cane molasses, 40 g $(NH_4)_2SO_4$ and 2 ml antifoam. The pH 129 was monitored online (Mettler Toledo, Giessen, Germany) and the solution was 130 maintained at pH 7.0 by the automatic addition of 25% NH₄OH (MP8 pump system, 131 Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany). The temperature was maintained at 30 °C. The pO₂ 132 was monitored online (Hamilton, Höchst, Germany) and maintained above 30% 133 saturation by adjusting the stirrer speed, aeration rate and oxygen level in the inlet 134 gas.

135

136 Substrate and product quantification

The cell concentration was determined as the optical density (OD_{660}) using photometric measurements at a wavelength of 660 nm. The concentration of cell dry mass (CDM) was calculated from the optical density using a correlation factor of CDM [g L⁻¹] = 0.32 x OD₆₆₀.^[7] Ectoine was quantified by HPLC (1290 Infinity, Agilent

Technologies, Waldbronn, Germany) using a reversed-phase column (Zorbax Eclipse
Plus C18, 4.6 x 100 mm, 3.5 μm, Agilent) as the stationary phase, demineralized
water (0.5 mL min⁻¹, 25°C) as the mobile phase and UV detection at 210 nm. Glucose
and organic acids were quantified by HPLC (Agilent 1260 Infinity).^[13] Amino acids
were analyzed by HPLC after derivatization with *ortho*-phthalaldehyde.^[14]

146

147 **Proteome analysis**

148 Quantitative shotgun proteomics was conducted as previously described, using ¹⁵Nlabeling for quantification.^[15, 16] For preparation of the ¹⁵N standard, strains P3.4 and 149 150 P11.37 were grown in mineral salt medium as described above, where the naturally 151 labeled $(NH_4)_2SO_4$ in the second preculture and in the main culture was replaced by 152 99% (¹⁵NH₄)₂SO₄ (Cambridge Isotope Laboratories, Inc., Andover, MA, USA). During 153 the exponential growth phase, cells were harvested by centrifugation (5 min, 10000 154 xq, 4 °C), washed with 20 mL of HEPES-KOH buffer (50 mM, pH 7.4, 4 °C), 155 centrifuged again (5 min, 10000 xg, 4 °C), and then resuspended in lysis buffer (50 156 mM NH₄HCO₃, 1 mM NaCl, 4 °C) to obtain a concentration of 4 (mg CDM) mL⁻¹. 157 Aliguots of 1.5 mL were directly frozen in liquid nitrogen. Before mixing with samples, the ¹⁵N standards generated for P3.4 and P11.37 were pooled (1:1). Sample 158 159 preparation was carried out consistently. Unlabeled samples and the ¹⁵N reference 160 standard were mixed at a ¹⁵N/¹⁴N ratio of 0.8 based on the CDM. Subsequently, cells 161 were transferred into 2 mL tubes (FastPrep-24 Lysing Matrix Tubes, 0.1 mm silica 162 spheres; MP Biomedicals, Santa Ana, CA, USA) and disrupted 3x 30 s at 6500 m s⁻¹ 163 in a ribolyzer (Precellys®-24 Homogenisator, Peglab Biotechnology GmbH, Erlangen, 164 Germany) with 1 min breaks on ice between disruption cycles. Cell debris was 165 removed by centrifugation (5 min, 17000 xg, 4 °C), and the supernatant was 166 transferred to a new tube and frozen in liquid nitrogen. The protein concentration was 167 determined via the bicinchoninic acid assay (Pierce™ BCA Protein Assay Kit, Thermo 168 Scientific). sample Fischer Subsequent processing and LC-ESI-MS/MS 169 measurements were conducted as described previously.^[15, 16] The libraries 170 (https://github.com/CSBiology/BioFSharp.Mz) BioFSharp. Mz and MzLite 171 (https://github.com/CSBiology/MzLite) were used for MS data analysis. Peptide 172 identification was based on the computed cross correlation between theoretical and 173 measured spectra with a mass tolerance of 25 ppm and up to three missed cleavages. 174 The peptide sequences were generated by digesting the Corynebacterium 175 glutamicum proteome in silico (UniProt Protein ID UP000000582 complemented with the engineered protein sequences of EctA, EctB, and EctC)^[6], considering ¹⁴N light 176 177 and ¹⁵N heavy stable isotopes. Light-to-heavy peptide ratios were calculated based 178 on the quantification of the peak areas of ¹⁵N peptide ions and ¹⁴N peptide ions. The 179 efficiency of ¹⁵N incorporation into the labeled peptides was estimated according to 180 previous work.^[17]

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Figure S1. Construction of the EctABC library. Each gene expression module consists of a synthetic promoter (P), a bicistronic design element (BCD) (B), a corresponding *ect* gene and the rrnBT1T2 transcription terminator (T). Abbreviation of restriction enzymes: B, *Bam*HI; K, *Kpn*I; N, *Not*I; Xb, *Xba*I; Xh, *Xho*I, S, *SaI*I, Sp, *SpeI*. The sequences of *XhoI* and *XbaI*-digested cohesive ends are complimentary to those of *SaI* I and *SpeI*, respectively.



Figure S2: Gel electrophoresis of PCR fragments for validation of the deletion of the
 L-lysine exporter *lysE* in *C. glutamicum lysC*. The different lanes show mutants with

202 the desired deletion (1, 2) and revertants (3,4). M = marker.



- 220





Figure S4: Growth and ectoine production in different synthetic mutants of *Corynebacterium glutamicum.* The strains shown are P3.4 (A,B), P3.32 (C,D), P11.28 (E,F), and P11.37 (G,H). Errors represent standard deviations from three biological replicates. Due to its superior performance, strain P3.4 is also designated *C. glutamicum ectABC*^{opt} in this work.





Figure S5: Impact of the transcriptional balancing of *ectA*, *ectB*, and *ectC* on ectoine production in *Corynebacterium glutamicum*. The data show the predicted promotor strength in high- (P3.4 – P3.12), medium- (P11.19-P11.37), and low-titer producers (P3.10-P11.23). Due to its superior performance, strain P3.4 is also designated *C. glutamicum ectABC*^{opt} in this work.

237 Table S1. Strains and plasmids used in this study.

Name	Description	Reference
C. glutamicum lysC ^{fbr}	Wild-type ATCC 13032 with the	[1, 18]
	nucleotide replacement S301Y in the	
	lysC gene, which encodes	
	aspartokinase	
C. glutamicum lysC ^{fbr} ∆lysE	<i>lysC^{fbr}</i> + deletion of the lysine exporter <i>LysE</i> (Ncgl1214)	This work
Δ lysE ectABC ^{basic}		This work
C. glutamicum PX.Y ^a	C. glutamicum lysC ^{tbr} ∆lysE expressing	This work
	a variant from the ectoine cluster library	
<i>Ε. coli</i> DH5α	Heat-shock-competent cells for the	Invitrogen
	amplification of transformation vectors	
<i>E. coli</i> XL1-Blue	Electroporation competent cells for	Stratagene
	library construction	
E. coli NM522	Heat-shock-competent cells for	Invitrogen
	amplification and methylation of	
	transformation vectors	
pTc15AcgIM	Expression of the C. glutamicum-	[2]
	specific methyltransferase	
pClik 5a MCS	Episomal expression vector	[19]
pClik 5a MCS <i>tuf_p</i>	Episomal vector for the expression of	This work
ectABC	the codon-optimized ectoine gene	
	cluster ectABC from P. stutzeri ^[6]	
pCES208	Episomal expression vector	[10, 20]
	Ectoine gene cluster library plasmids	This work
ρομοζού ΓΛ.Λ		
	based on pCES208	

240 ^a The code PX.Y for the library mutants refers to an internal numbering of the strains, reflecting plate number and colony number from the isolation.

Table S2. Oligonucleotides used for construction and sequencing of the nativeectoine cluster

	Name	Sequence (5'- 3')
	Sequencing primer	
	Pr1_seq_ <i>EctA</i>	CGAGCTGGTGCAGGTTGTAG
	Pr2_seq_ <i>EctB</i>	TCGATGTAGCGCTTGCCATCC
	Pr3_seq_ <i>EctC</i>	GAAGGAGAAGCCCACCTTATC
	Construction primer	
	Pr1_ _₽ <i>tufEctABC</i> _FW	GGGCCCGGTACCACGCGTCATGGCCGTTACCCTGCGAA
	Pr2_ _p <i>tufEctABC</i> _RV	CCCTAGGTCCGAACTAGTCATATTACACGGTTTCTGCTTCCAGTG
246 247 248 249		

Table S3. Synthetic promoters used for library construction. According to their
strength, they are classified into high (H), intermediate (I), and low strength (L).

Name	Sequence (5'- 3')
H36	GGTACCTCTATCTGGTGCCCTAAACGGGGGAATATTAACGGGCCCAGGGT
	GGTCGCACCTTGGTTGGTAGGAGTAGCATGGGATCC
H4	GGTACCTGGATTTAGCAATTGGAGTGGCGTATCATGGACGTCCAATTGAGG
	TATAATAACAGGAGAAGAGGAGAAGCAGGGGATCC
H5	GGTACCGGTGGTCGTGCTGACTCTACGGGGGGGGAGGAAGTTCAGCTGGTACT
	GCTCGCGTTGGCTGATAAAGGAGTAGAGTTGGATCC
H30	GGTACCAAAGTAACTTTTCGGTTAAGGTAGCGCATTCGTGGTGTTGCCCGT
	GGCCCGGTTGGTTGGGCAGGAGTATATTGGGATCC
H72	GGTACCGGAGACAATTTGTGCTTCGACGATTTTGTTGGTTAGCACGATCAT
	TTACTGGCGCGCCTCCTAGGAGTATTCTTGGATCC
H17	GGTACCCCGAGTAGCCGGCCCGAGGGTTAAGGTTAGATTGTTGATCGTCG
	TGGCACGGTGGGACTTGTAGGAGTAAGTTGGGATCC
H3	GGTACCTTCGCTTGTAGTTTGGGGGGTGTCGCTTATGGTTTAGATCTTCCGT
	TGCAGACGAGTGATTTGAGGATTAGAGTCGGATCC
H28	GGTACCGGGGTTTGGCCGATCGGTATTCTCCTTACATTCGGCTTTAAGTTA
	GCAATTACTTTATGCTTAGGAGTATCGTTGGATCC
H34	GGTACCCTGCAAGGCAATGTTCGATGTTGGGCTTCATTTTGAGGGTTTGGT
	TGAGTTTCAAGGGTCGTAGGATAATAATGGGATCC
129	GGTACCCCTTTTTGAGTGATGAATTTGGTCTTGGTTCGGTTGGTGTTAGTG
	GGGGTGTATTGGGGTAATAGGAGTATGCTTGGATCC
19	GGTACCGACATAGAGAAGGTCTTTTTCTGTTATAGTGTGGAAGCGTATGGA
	CCGCGCTATGGGAGGGTAGGATTTGGATGGGATCC
l12	GGTACCAGTAGTACAGAGATATAGTTCCGGTGGGCGTGTTTGGGATGTGC
	TTCTGGTCGTTGCCCAATAGGAGTACGATTGGATCC
l15	GGTACCGTGGTAGTGCTTTGATCGGCTGTAGATAGTGACTTGGATTTTAGA
	TTGTTGTCGGGTCTCTGAGGATATATTCTGGATCC
164	GGTACCGGATTTCTTCGTGGTGTCGGGCTAGTAAGCTACGGTTGGTGGCC
	TTTTGTTACCCGTCGTTTAGGACTAGAGTCGGATCC
151	GGTACCCTGTGTCGTAGGTCTCAAACGGCGTGGAGTTACGGGCTCCCGCA
	TGGCGTGTCACTAGCGTAAGGAGCTAGAGTGGATCC
L10	GGTACCGCAGACGGTTATGGTCGCCGCTAGGTCTTGGGGAGTTTTGTTCG
	GTAGTTATTTATTGTTGAAGGAGATAGATTGGATCC
L80	GGTACCTTATTGTGGATGTGCTCGTATACCATTGGGGGGCATGTCAGCGGC
	GGTTAGTAGTGTAGATGTAGGAGGGCATTGGGATCC
L26	GGTACCGTGAGTTTAGAGCAGGGGGGGGGGGGGTTCTTTATGTATG
	TCGCTTTAGTATGCGTTAGGATTACTATCGGATCC

Table S4. Bicistronic design elements used for library construction.

	Name	Sequence (5'- 3')
High strength	BCD2	GGGCCCAAGTTCACTTAAAAAGGAGATCAACAAT GAAAGCAATTTTCGTACTGAAACATCTTAATCATG CTAAGGAGGTTTTCTAATG
Low strength	BCD21	GGGCCCAAGTTCACTTAAAAAGGAGATCAACAAT GAAAGCAATTTTCGTACTGAAACATCTTAATCATG CGAGGGATGGTTTCTAATG
Medium strength	BCD8	GGGCCCAAGTTCACTTAAAAAGGAGATCAACAAT GAAAGCAATTTTCGTACTGAAACATCTTAATCATG CATCGGACCGTTTCTAATG
		CATCGGACCGTITCTAATG

Table S5. Oligonucleotides used for library construction

263 264

Name	Sequence (5'- 3')
BCD-E-BamHI	ATTAATGGATCCGGGCCCAAGTTCACTTAAAAAGGAGATC
	AACAATGAAAGCAATTTTCGTACTGAAAC
BCD2-EctA-E1	GAAAGCAATTTTCGTACTGAAACATCTTAATCATGCTAAGG
	AGGTTTTCTAATGCCAACCCTGAAGCGCAACT
BCD21-EctA-E1	GAAAGCAATTTTCGTACTGAAACATCTTAATCATGCGAGGG
	ATGGTTTCTAATGCCAACCCTGAAGCGCAACT
BCD8-EctA-F1	GAAAGCAATTTCGTACTGAAACATCTTAATCATGCATCGG
BCD2-EctB-F1	GAAAGCAATTTCGTACTGAAACATCTTAATCATGCTAAGG
BCD21-EctB-F1	
BCD8-EctB-F1	
BCD2-EctC-F1	
BCD21-EctC-F1	ATGGTTTCTAATGATCGTGCGCACCCTG
	GAAAGCAATTTTCGTACTGAAACATCTTAATCATGCATCGG
BCD8-EctC-F1	ACCGTTTCTAATGATCGTGCGCACCCTG
	ATTAATGCGGCCGCTCATTATGCGTGTTCTTTCAGTTCTTC
ECIA-R-NOII	TTCCAG
EctB-R-NotI	ATTAATGCGGCCGCTCATTAGGATGCCTGGTTTTCGGTCT
EctC-R-Notl	ATTAATGCGGCCGCTCATTACACGGTTTCTGCTTCCAGT
Xhol-EctA-F	GCTCCTCGAGAAAGGGAACAAAAGCTGGGTAC
EctA-Sall-Xbal- R	CGAGTCTAGAGTCGACTCACCGACAAAACAACAGATAAAA
Xhol-EctB-F	GCTCCTCGAGAAAGGGAACAAAAGCTGGGTAC
EctB-Sall-Xbal- R	CGAGTCTAGATTGTCGACTCACCGACAAACAACAGATAAA A
Sall-EctC-F	GCTCGTCGACAAAGGGAACAAAAGCTGGGTAC
EctC-Xbal-R	CGAGTCTAGATCACCGACAAACAACAGATAAAA

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