The IMPACT Kit Includes
Vector DNA – pTXB1, pTYB21
Control Vector – pMXB10
Anti-CBD Monoclonal Antibody
Chitin Resin (store at 4°C)
1, 4-Dithiothreitol (DTT), 1 M
3X Sample Buffer
Introduction

The IMPACT (Intein Mediated Purification with an Affinity Chitin-binding Tag) system is a novel protein purification strategy that utilizes the inducible self-cleavage activity of protein splicing elements (termed inteins) to separate the target protein from the affinity tag (1). It distinguishes itself from all other purification systems by its ability to purify, in a single chromatographic step, a native recombinant protein without the use of a protease. Each intein tag contains a chitin binding domain (CBD) for the affinity purification of the fusion protein on chitin resin (2–4). Induction of on-column cleavage, using thiol reagents such as dithiothreitol (DTT), releases the target protein from the intein tag (Figures 1, 2). The vectors included in this kit allow for the fusion of the target protein at its C-terminus (pTXB1) (3,5) or at its N-terminus (pTYB21) (4,6) to the intein tag.

In addition, with the use of pTXB1, native recombinant proteins that possess a reactive C-terminal thioester can be isolated for applications, including protein semisynthesis and site-specific labeling [3,7, Intein Mediated Protein Ligation (IPL, Appendix I)].

Figure 1. Schematic Illustration of the IMPACT System.

Advantages of the IMPACT System

- Single column purification – without the use of a protease to remove the affinity tag
- Ability to produce a native target protein without vector derived amino acids
- Fusion to either the C-terminus or the N-terminus of the target protein
- Isolation of proteins with or without an N-terminal methionine residue
- Ligation and labeling of recombinant proteins
- T7 promoter-driven system to achieve high levels of expression and tight transcriptional control in E. coli.
Description of System Components:

Vectors

pTXB1 (NEB #N6707) contains a mini-intein from the *Mycobacterium xenopi gyrA* gene (Mxe GyrA intein; 198 amino acid residues) that has been modified to undergo thiol-induced cleavage at its N-terminus (3,5). The vector allows for the purification of a target protein without any extra amino acids by cloning into the NdeI and SapI sites. The target protein is fused at its C-terminus to a self-cleavable intein tag (~28 kDa) that contains the chitin binding domain (CBD, 6 kDa), thereby allowing for affinity purification of the fusion precursor on a chitin column.

The pTYB21 (NEB #N6701) vector utilizes an intein from the *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* VMA1 gene (Sce VMA1 intein; 454 amino acids) (4,6). The target protein is fused at its N-terminus to a self-cleavable VMA1 intein-CBD tag (56 kDa); the tag allows for the affinity purification of the fusion precursor on a chitin column. The vector is designed to allow for purification of a target protein without any extra amino acids, or without an N-terminal methionine residue, by cloning its 5' end into the SapI site.

Other Vectors and Applications

The flexibility in fusion protein construction is designed to increase the probability of successful expression and purification of a target protein. If you wish to express a protein with an N-terminal cysteine, please use Intein1 (Ssp DnaB Intein) in the pTWIN1 Vector (NEB #N6951). The pTWIN1 vector is also used to conduct sophisticated protein engineering projects such as protein ligation and cyclization. If you do not wish to use a thiol reagent for cleavage, the Intein1 (Ssp DnaB Intein) in the pTWIN1 Vector may be used; cleavage is induced by temperature shift (from 4°C to room temperature) and/or pH shift (from pH 8.5 to 6).

See Frequently Asked Questions (page 14 and website) and Companion Products (page 18).

Figure 2. Expression and Purification of *E. coli* maltose-binding protein (MBP) using the pTXB vector (pMXB10).
Figure 3A. Polylinkers in the vectors pTXB1 and pTYB21. ▼ Indicates intein cleavage site.

pTXB1

\[ \text{T7 promoter} \rightarrow \text{lac operator} \rightarrow \text{XhoI} \]
\[ \ldots \text{CGC GAA ATT AAT ACG ACT CAC TAT AGG GGA ATT GTG AGC GGA TAA CAA TTC CCC TCT AGA} \]

Shine-Dalgarno

\[ \text{AAT AAT TTT GTT TAA CTT TAA GAA GGA GAT ATA CAT ATG GTG AGC TCG CTA GAC GGC GGC GGC CGC} \]
\[ \text{M A S S R V D G G R} \]

EcoRI  XhoI  SapI  Spel
\[ \text{GAA TTC CTC GAG GGC TCT TCC TGC ATC ACG GGA GAT GCA GTA GTC... (89 bp)} \]
\[ \text{E F L E G S S C} \]

**Indicates intein cleavage site**

*Note: Ndel and SspI should be used for cloning the target gene.*

pTYB21

\[ \text{Intein} \rightarrow \text{SapI} \rightarrow \text{Ndel} \rightarrow \text{NcoI} \rightarrow \text{NotI} \]
\[ \text{EcoRV  SalI  BamHI  EcoRI  SbfI/PstI} \]
\[ \text{GAT ATC GTC GAC GAA TCC GAA TCT CTA GAC GGT AAT TAA... 3'} (58 bp) \]
\[ \text{D I V D G S E F P A G N} * \]

Figure 3B. pTXB1 vector. All unique sites are shown.
Expression of your gene of interest in a T7 expression strain

For expression of your protein of interest, any competent *E. coli* T7 expression host strain [e.g., T7 Express or BL21(DE3)] may be transformed with the IMPACT vector in which your gene of interest has been inserted. T7 Express (NEB #C2566) and BL21(DE3) (NEB #C2527) Competent *E. coli* cells are available for purchase. These strains are deficient in both Lon and OmpT proteases. Please see our product webpages for strain-specific genotypes.

Chitin Resin (NEB #S6651)

A chitin affinity matrix is used to isolate the fusion precursor that contains the target protein, intein and a chitin binding domain (CBD). 20 ml of Chitin Resin (NEB #S6651) are supplied as a 40 ml slurry in 20% ethanol. The binding capacity for the intein tag fused to the target protein, maltose binding protein (MBP), is 2 mg of eluted MBP protein per ml of chitin resin. Chitin Resin should be stored at 4°C.

Anti-CBD Monoclonal Antibody (NEB #E8034)

Mouse monoclonal antibody raised against a peptide derived from the *Bacillus circulans* chitin binding domain is provided for Western blot analysis (1:1000). Store at −20°C.

1, 4-Dithiothreitol (DTT)

A 1.0 M DTT solution is provided in the IMPACT Kit. Since DTT is not particularly stable after dilution, the cleavage buffer should be freshly prepared before use. DTT stock solutions should be aliquoted to minimize freeze/thaw cycles. Store at −20°C.

3X SDS Sample Buffer (Blue Loading Buffer Pack, NEB #B7703)

187.5 mM Tris-HCl (pH 6.8 @ 25°C), 6% (w/v) SDS, 30% glycerol and 0.03% (w/v) bromophenol blue (store at room temperature). DTT should be added to the 3X SDS Sample Buffer, to a final concentration of 40 mM (see note in Table 1A). Store at −20°C.
**Construction of the Fusion Plasmid:**

**Cloning Considerations**

The identity of the amino acid residues adjacent to the intein has been shown to affect the cleavage reaction and should be taken into consideration (see Tables 1A and 1B). These tables are only a guide, since the folding of the entire fusion protein, not just a single amino acid, affects cleavage.

It is difficult to accurately predict the extent of expression of a target protein-intein fusion, thus we recommend cloning the insert into different vectors and conducting small scale purifications. In our experience we have found pTXB1 to be the most consistent and reliable expression vector.

If a target protein without vector-derived amino acids is required, the pTXB1 or the pTYB21 vector can be used.

If a C-terminal fusion is required, where the C-terminus of the target protein is fused to the intein, then the pTXB1 vector should be used. If a N-terminal fusion is required, the pTYB21 vector should be used.

In the presence of thiols such as DTT, β-mercaptoethanol or cysteine, the intein undergoes specific self-cleavage which releases the target protein from the chitin-bound intein tag resulting in a single-column purification of the target protein. Furthermore, when pTXB1 is utilized, the use of thiol reagents, such as 2-mercaptoethanesulfonic acid (MESNA), releases a protein with a reactive thioester at the C-terminus of the target protein for use in intein mediated protein ligation (IPL)(3).

In general, three cloning approaches can be considered in order to prepare a desired intein-target gene fusion construct. The conventional method is to perform cloning using restriction enzymes. Alternatively, the gene of interest can be cloned into an IMPACT vector using either NEBuilder HiFi DNA Assembly Cloning Kit (NEB #E5520) or Gibson Assembly Cloning Kit (NEB #E5510), without consideration of restriction enzyme sites in the target and vector. The NEBuilder Assembly Tool found on our website can be used to design the required primers. Please refer to the section on Cloning using NEBuilder HiFi or Gibson Assembly Methods on page 10.

If you wish to express a protein with an N-terminal cysteine, please use Intein1 (Spa DnaB Intein) in the pTWIN1 Vector; pTYB21 should not be used as splicing can occur (4).

**Restriction Enzyme Cloning**

If restriction enzyme cloning is used, the SapI site should be used as the 3’ cloning site in pTXB1 or the 5’ cloning site in pTYB21. If another restriction site is used in pTXB1 an unfavorable amino acid for cleavage will be encoded at the cleavage site, adjacent to the intein.

In addition, many restriction sites within the polylinker of pTYB21 are shared with pMAL vectors. If an insert is subcloned using these sites (excluding Sap I), it can be subcloned into any of these vectors either in parallel or as a subsequent experiment. This simplifies an examination of expression in the IMPACT System (E. coli), pMAL Protein Fusion and Purification System (E. coli) (NEB #E8200) and K. lactis Protein Expression Kit (Kluyveromyces lactis) (NEB #E1000). Please see "Construction of the Fusion Plasmid" on page 6 for details.

The NEBuilder HiFi DNA Assembly Cloning Kit (NEB #E5520) or the Gibson Assembly Cloning Kit (NEB #E5510) can be used for cloning. Please note that with these two cloning kits, you do not need to be concerned with the restriction enzyme sites in your target gene. Please refer to the section on these cloning strategies on page 10.

The control vector, pMXB10 (NEB #N6903), derived from pTXB1, carries the control target protein, maltose binding protein (MBP), already inserted upstream of the Mxe GyrA intein-CBD. Induction yields the MBP-Mxe GyrA intein-CBD fusion (~71 kDa) which, when cleaved, results in the elution of MBP (43 kDa). The polylinker regions flanking the coding region for MBP can conveniently be used to clone a gene of interest. Note that after intein cleavage the target protein will contain additional amino acids at its C-terminus, including (LEY), which has had a high rate of successful cleavage (see Appendix II on page 18 for cloning into pMXB10).

The IMPACT vectors utilize a T7 promoter to provide stringent control of expression of the fusion gene in E. coli (8).

**Cloning into pTXB1 using restriction enzymes**

The mini-intein (Mxe GyrA intein) in pTXB1 has been used to purify a wide range of target protein fusions. Cloning into the Ndel and the SapI sites results in the fusion of the intein to the C-terminus of the target protein, without any extra amino acids on the target protein after cleavage of the intein tag. **The SapI site must be used to clone the 3’ end of an insert.** The SapI site can also be used for the inclusion of extra amino acid residues favorable for con-trollable cleavage (by engineering the extra codons into the primers; Table 2).

If the insert sequence contains an internal SapI site the following options exist:

1. Use the pMXB10 vector (See Appendix II).
2. If the insert does not contain a SpeI site, then the SpeI site present near the N-terminus of the Mxe GyrA intein can be used by designing a primer that contains the intein sequence; this can result in a fusion without any vector-derived residues following cleavage.
Table 1A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C-TERMINAL RESIDUE OF THE TARGET PROTEIN</th>
<th>% CLEAVAGE AFTER 16 HOURS*</th>
<th>% CLEAVAGE AFTER 40 HOURS*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4°C</td>
<td>23°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gln</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Lys</td>
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<td>His</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cys</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Val</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gly</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asp²</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ser</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>5-15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effect of the C-terminal residue of a target protein on DTT-induced cleavage with pTXB1. The C-terminal amino acid of the target protein, paramyosin, was mutated immediately upstream of the intein cleavage site. Cleavage was induced with 40 mM DTT in 30 mM Tris, pH 8.5, 0.5M NaCl. Percent cleavage was determined by Coomassie stained SDS-PAGE analysis of chitin beads before and after DTT cleavage.

Note: Boiling in SDS Sample Buffer containing DTT can cause partial or complete cleavage, resulting in an overestimation of in vivo cleavage. If substantial in vivo cleavage is observed, the cell extract should be evaluated in a SDS Sample Buffer containing no DTT.

¹ Leu showed ~50% in vivo cleavage when induced at 15°C; at 37°C in vivo cleavage was less than 5%.
² Asp showed ~50% in vivo cleavage when expression was induced at 15°C and 37°C.
Effect of the N-terminal residue of a target protein on DTT-induced cleavage with pTYB21. The N-terminal amino acid of the target protein, T4 DNA ligase, was mutated immediately downstream of the intein cleavage site. Cleavage was induced with 40 mM DTT in 30 mM Hepes, pH 8.0, 0.5M NaCl. Percent cleavage was determined by Coomassie stained SDS-PAGE analysis of chitin beads before and after DTT cleavage.

1. Leu showed ~50% in vivo cleavage when induced at 15°C; at 37°C in vivo cleavage was less than 5%.
2. Asp showed ~50% in vivo cleavage when expression was induced at 15°C and 37°C.

3. PCR with a proofreading polymerase to generate a blunt-end product for ligation with pTXB1 that has been digested with SapI and filled in. The Quick Blunting™ Kit (NEB #E1201) can be used to generate a vector with blunt ends.

4. Use the NEBuilder® HiFi DNA Assembly Cloning Kit (NEB #E5520) or the Gibson Assembly® Cloning Kit [(NEB #E5510) (see page 10)].

Cloning into pTYB21 Using Restriction Enzymes

Use of the SapI site results in the fusion of the target gene adjacent to the intein tag so that the target protein can be purified without any non-native residues. The SapI site can be used for the inclusion of extra amino acid residues favorable for cleavage (by engineering the extra codons into the primers; Table 2). If the NdeI site is used four extra amino acids (Gly-Arg-Ala-His) will be added to the N-terminal of the protein. A stop codon should be included in the reverse primer when constructing a N-terminal fusion.

If the N-terminal amino acid of the target protein is a Cys or Ser, please use the Intein1 (Spy DnaB Intein) of the pTWIN1 Vector (NEB #N6951), not pTYB21.

When pTYB21 is used, a small N-terminal peptide (15 amino acid residues, 1.6 kDa) is also cleaved from the intein tag and co-eluted with the target protein. It cannot be detected on a regular SDS-PAGE and can be removed by dialysis, size exclusion chromatography, or centrifugal filtration with appropriate molecular weight cutoffs to retain your target protein.
Cloning into pMXB10
For cloning into pMXB10 NdeI, SapI or NcoI can be used as the 5’ cloning site. The 3’ cloning site can be SacI, HindIII, NotI, EcoRI or XhoI (See Appendix II).

Note: BspQI (NEB #R0712) is an isoschizomer of SapI (NEB #R0569) and can be used instead of SapI.

Primer Design for Restriction Enzyme Cloning
Appropriate restriction sites, absent in the target gene, are incorporated in the forward and reverse primers when a target gene is generated by PCR. The choice of the restriction site in the primers determines whether any, or which, additional amino acid residues will be attached to the terminus of the target protein after the cleavage of the intein tag.

Table 2 illustrates some examples of designing forward and reverse primers for pTXB1 and pTYB21. For cloning into pTXB1 one should clone a target gene between the NdeI (forward primer) and the SapI (reverse primer) sites. For the pTYB21 vector, the SapI site can be used to clone the 5’ end of the target gene (PstI as the 3’ cloning site for pTYB21 is shown as an example for a reverse primer in the table below).

Table 2: Primer design for pTXB1 and pTYB21.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESTRICTION SITE</th>
<th>SEQUENCE (RESTRICTION SITE UNDERLINED)</th>
<th>CLONING VECTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NdeI</td>
<td>5’- GGT GGT CAT ATG NNN NNN…-3’ (forward primer)</td>
<td>pTXB1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SapI1</td>
<td>5’- GGT GGT TGC TCT TCC GCA NNN NNN…-3’ (reverse primer)</td>
<td>pTXB1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SapI2</td>
<td>5’- GGT GGT TGC TCT TCC AAC NNN NNN…-3’ (forward primer)</td>
<td>pTYB21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PstI3</td>
<td>5’- GGT GGT CTG CAG TCA NNN NNN…-3’ (reverse primer)</td>
<td>pTYB21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. SapI digestion creates a 3-nt overhang (GCA) for ligation with the SapI-digested pTXB1 vector (containing a TGC overhang), resulting in an in-frame fusion to the N-terminus of an intein. The SapI site can be used to add one or more additional amino acid residue(s) to the target protein by including an appropriate sequence (e.g., add ACC in the reverse primer corresponding to a GGT codon for a glycine residue). The SapI site is not regenerated after cloning.

2. SapI digestion creates a 3-nt overhang (AAC) compatible with the SapI digested pTYB21 (containing a GTT overhang). The SapI site is not regenerated after cloning.

3. A stop codon should be included in the reverse primer when constructing a N-terminal fusion.

When constructing an N-terminal fusion (pTYB21), a stop codon should be encoded in the reverse primer. The reverse primer for the C-terminal fusion (pTXB1) should not include a stop codon.

We recommend writing out your primers and cloning strategy in order to check SapI (or BspQI) digestion, the reading frames etc. For more information on cloning with SapI, please refer to our IMPACT FAQs on the web.

In general, more than 15 bp of target gene sequence is required for PCR (represented by “NNNNNN…”). In Table 2 the restriction site is underlined. The “GGTG” sequence at the 5’ end of the primer is a random sequence of 6 bp to ensure efficient DNA cleavage by the restriction enzyme.

Cloning Using Restriction Enzymes
The following brief protocol describes the cloning of an amplified target gene fragment using restriction enzymes that create non-compatible sticky ends for direct cloning into the IMPACT vectors. Users can follow standard techniques to clone the PCR amplified gene. For blunt-end or single site cloning, the vector may need to be treated with a phosphatase (Calf Intestinal Phosphatase, CIP, NEB #M0290). If necessary, the PCR product can be sub-cloned into a PCR cloning vector before cloning into an IMPACT vector.

1. Restriction Digestion and Ligation: The amplified gene fragment is electrophoresed on an agarose gel and the gene fragment is purified. The purified fragment is double-digested with the appropriate restriction enzymes; the vector (0.5–1 μg) is also digested with the same enzymes.

Note: SapI tends to settle in the tube so mix it with a pipette prior to removing it from the vial.

Following a 1 to 2 hour digestion, both reaction mixtures are loaded onto a 1% low melting TAE agarose gel. Each of the gel slices (100–200 μl, the smaller the volume the better) containing the digested gene fragment and IMPACT vector are melted at 65°C for 10 minutes and treated with β-Agarase I (NEB #M0392; 1 μl per 50 μl) for one hour at 42°C. Alternatively, the Monarch DNA Gel Extraction Kit (NEB #T1020) can be used to isolate the DNA. Ligation is conducted using the Quick Ligation™ Kit (NEB #M2200) for five minutes at room temperature by mixing the vector and the insert in an appropriate ratio (about 1:3). A control ligation reaction containing digested vector alone should be included.
2. Transformation: To reduce the background from the vector’s self-ligation, the ligation sample can be digested, prior to transformation, with a restriction enzyme whose recognition site is deleted from the poly linker during cloning and is also absent from the insert. This linearizes any remaining parental vector. Fusion constructs should initially be established in a non-restricting (r m’ or r m”), non-expression E. coli strain [i.e., NEB 10-beta (NEB #C3019)], especially when cloning a potentially toxic gene.

Cloning using NEBuilder HiFi or Gibson Assembly
You could also use the NEBuilder HiFi DNA (NEB #E5520) or Gibson Assembly Cloning Kit (NEB #E5510) to generate your construct. The advantage of these strategies is that they do not depend on the presence of restriction enzyme sites, so they can be used in all cases, regardless of the presence or absence of restriction sites in your target gene or vector. Please refer to our Gibson Assembly Cloning Kit FAQs and our IMPACT Kit FAQs on the web for further details.

The outline of the NEBuilder HiFi/Gibson Assembly Cloning is given below:

1. Design primers to amplify target gene (and/or vector) with appropriate overlaps. Try our primer design tool, NEBuilder Assembly Tool, found on our website.
2. PCR amplify target gene using a high-fidelity DNA polymerase (such as NEB Q5 High-Fidelity DNA Polymerase, NEB #M0491). Prepare linearized vector by restriction digestion or PCR.
3. Confirm and determine concentration of fragments and linearized vector using agarose gel electrophoresis, a NanoDrop™ instrument or other method.
4. Add PCR fragments and linearized vector to NEBuilder HiFi/Gibson Assembly Master Mix and incubate at 50°C for 15 minutes.
5. Transform into NEB 5-alpha Competent E. coli (NEB #C2987) or NEB 10-beta Competent E. coli (NEB #C3019). The NEBuilder HiFi and Gibson Cloning Kits include NEB 5-alpha High Efficiency Competent Cells.

Fusion Constructs
1. Analysis of plasmid DNA: Restriction digests with the same restriction enzymes that were used for cloning the target gene fragment can be used to screen for correct clones, except when SapI is used because the SapI site is lost after ligation. It is also possible to use other restriction sites present in the plasmid. Colony PCR or colony hybridization can be used to screen a large number of transformants for the presence of the target gene.
2. Analysis of protein expression: Transform your competent E. coli T7 expression strain with your correct plasmid construct. Inoculate 5–10 freshly grown colonies, each in 4 ml LB ampicillin media. Grow the culture at 37°C until it reaches an OD$_{600}$ of ~0.5 or slightly turbid. Transfer 2 ml to a sterile tube as an uninduced control. Induce protein expression with 0.4 mM IPTG at 37°C for 2–3 hours or at 15°C overnight. Mix 40 μl culture with 20 μl 3X SDS-PAGE Sample Buffer. Boil for 5 minutes and load 15 μl of both uninduced and induced samples on SDS-PAGE and stain with Coomassie blue.

Immunodetection with Mouse Anti-CBD Monoclonal Antibody (NEB #E8034) can be used to detect the intein-CBD fusion proteins in total cell lysates. Immunodetection is not necessary if an induced band can be easily visualized by Coomassie blue staining of a SDS-PAGE.

3. Sequencing: Clones should be further confirmed by DNA sequencing before proceeding to the cell culture and protein expression steps.
4. Storage: The plasmid encoding the correct fusion protein should be stored at –20°C or a glycerol stock should be made of the cells containing the expression plasmid and stored at –80°C.

Fusion Protein Expression:
The expression of the fusion protein may be affected by a variety of factors such as the (a) E. coli strain, (b) cell growth conditions (e.g., temperature, aeration, cell density, IPTG concentration, etc.), (c) toxicity of the target protein, (d) codon usage and (e) structure and stability of mRNA. E. coli ER2566 cells are supplied in the kit (not competent) as a host for fusion protein expression from an IMPACT vector. High efficiency competent cells of this strain, T7 Express (NEB #C2566) are available separately. For expression of toxic proteins, T7 Express lysY/lysF Competent E. coli (High Efficiency) (NEB #C3013) and T7 Express lysY Competent E. coli (High Efficiency) (NEB #C3010) are also available. For some proteins, especially those containing disulfide bonds, soluble expression is achieved with the SHuffle T7 Express E. coli cells (NEB #C3029). Expression of a toxic protein may require lowering the culture temperature.

Induction of protein expression at 12–15°C can often help the folding and the solubility of the fusion protein and increase the cleavage efficiency of the intein.

For all protein samples, remove a 40 μl aliquot from the culture and mix with 20 μl 3X SDS Sample Buffer (Figure 2). The samples are then boiled for five minutes before loading onto a gel. If necessary, the samples can be stored at –20°C for a few days.
The following protocol is provided as a general guideline (see Figure 4, page 13).

Cell Culture

1. Inoculate 1 liter of LB medium, containing 100 μg/ml ampicillin, with a freshly grown colony. Using cells stored at 4°C or an overnight culture may lower the protein yield.

2. Incubate the culture in an orbital shaker at 37°C until the OD_{600} reaches 0.5.

Induction of Protein Expression

3. IPTG is added to a final concentration of 0.4 mM for induction of protein expression. Before the addition of IPTG, an aliquot of cell culture should be removed and incubated separately as an uninduced control. Initially, induction at 37°C for 2–4 hours can be tested for expression and solubility.

4. Remove a sample (40 μl) and mix with 20 μl 3X SDS Sample Buffer for both the uninduced and induced culture samples. (Figure 4: Sample 1 - uninduced sample and Sample 2 - induced crude cell extract). The cells from the IPTG-induced culture are spun down at 5,000 x g for 15 minutes at 4°C and the supernatant is discarded. The cell pellet can be stored at –80°C.

5. Resuspend the cell pellet from a one liter culture in 100 ml of the appropriate ice-cold Column Buffer (See Media and Solutions, page 14).

The inclusion of nonionic detergents in the buffer can reduce nonspecific protein binding to the chitin resin during the affinity column step. Oxidation-sensitive proteins can be stabilized during purification by using the reducing agents TCEP [tris-(2-carboxyethyl)phosphine] or TCCP [tris-(2-cyanoethyl)phosphine] (0.1 mM) in the Column buffer. Egg white lysozyme is not recommended for cell lysis because it is known to bind and degrade chitin. Cell lysis reagents, such as B-PER® (Thermo Scientific, Rockford, IL), can be used if sonication (Step 6) cannot be performed.

6. Lyse the cells by sonication on ice.

Sonicate in short pulses. Keep the cell culture cold during sonication and minimize bubble/foam formation. The release of protein can be monitored by using Bradford Reagent (BioRad, Hercules, CA) or OD_{280}. Continue sonication until the level of the released protein level reaches a maximum.

7. Centrifuge the lysate at 15,000 x g for 30 minutes at 4°C; the supernatant is the clarified extract to be loaded on the chitin column. Remove 40 μl from the supernatant and mix with 20 μl 3X SDS Sample Buffer for the clarified protein sample (Figure 4: Sample 3 - clarified extract). Save the cell pellet at –20°C for future analysis.

Optimization of Expression

If the target fusion protein is present as an induced band in the crude cell extract but absent from the clarified cell extract, this may indicate a solubility problem. Also if in vivo cleavage is detected (the induced sample contains the intein-CBD and target protein as two discrete bands on SDS-PAGE) different induction conditions should be tested. Usually induction at lower temperatures and/or with lower IPTG concentrations results in increased solubility, improved folding, and subsequent thiol induced cleavage. In order to optimize expression conditions we recommend splitting a one liter culture into several samples (100–200 ml each) and testing for optimal expression conditions. The optimal incubation temperature and time for induction will vary depending on the target protein. We recommend varying induction temperature and time to optimize expression (37°C for 2–4 hours, 30°C for 4–6 hours, 22–25°C for 6–16 hours and 12–15°C overnight using 0.4 mM IPTG). One sample lacking IPTG should be incubated as a control for uninduced cells. Varying IPTG concentrations (up to 1 mM) can also be tested. Lowering the IPTG concentration (0.01–0.1 mM) may also reduce the fusion protein expression in inclusion bodies. For low temperature induction (e.g., 12–15°C) the culture can be incubated at 37°C until the OD_{600} reaches 0.6–0.7.

Different E. coli T7 expression strains, such as T7 Express (NEB #C2566) and SHuffle T7 Express (NEB #C3029), can be tested for optimal soluble expression. The SHuffle strain has been shown to help soluble expression of some proteins with disulfide bonds. Fusion protein expression can be examined by SDS-PAGE, followed by Coomassie staining or western blot analysis, or by an activity assay. Analyze samples from both the total cell extract (soluble and insoluble proteins) and clarified extract (soluble). If the fusion protein is not detected by Coomassie staining, a Western blot with the Mouse Anti-CBD Monoclonal Antibody (NEB #E8034) may be performed. If the cell pellet needs to be tested, dissolve the pellet from a 100–200 ml culture in 10–20 ml column buffer and mix 40 μl of the pellet suspension with 20 μl of the 3X SDS Sample Buffer. The pellet can also be dissolved in a buffer containing urea. This sample can be saved for analysis (by loading 5–10 μl on a SDS-PAGE) if the fusion protein is not detected in the clarified (soluble) extract.
**Affinity Purification and On-column Cleavage:**

This should be performed with cold solutions at 4°C, unless otherwise stated.

**Preparation of Chitin Column**

Chitin resin should be thoroughly mixed and poured into an appropriately sized column in one swift step to minimize the presence of bubbles in the resin bed. The chitin resin bed should be washed with 10 column volumes of the Column Buffer prior to the loading of the crude cell extract. The chitin-binding domain (CBD) present in the intein-tag allows for the affinity purification of the fusion protein using chitin resin. Generally, a column packed with 10 ml of chitin resin (10 ml bed volume or 20 ml chitin resin slurry) should be used for a one liter culture (adjust the amount of resin according to expression level).

**Loading the Clarified Cell Extract**

Load the clarified extract onto the chitin column at a flow rate no faster than 0.5–1 ml/min. Take an SDS-PAGE sample of the flow through (Figure 4: Sample 4 - Flow through) and compare it to the clarified cell extract sample (Figure 4: Sample 3 - Crude cell extract) to indicate the binding efficiency of the fusion precursor to the chitin column. If some of the fusion precursor is present in the flow through you may need to increase the amount of resin and/or decrease the loading flow rate.

**Washing the Chitin Column**

At least 20 bed volumes of the Column Buffer should be used to wash the column (Sample 5). Due to the high affinity of the CBD for the chitin resin, a higher flow rate (e.g., 2 ml/min) and stringent wash conditions can be used to reduce nonspecific binding of other E. coli proteins [high salt concentration (0.5–1 M NaCl) and/or nonionic detergents]. Take an SDS-PAGE sample of the wash (Figure 4: Sample 5 - Wash) to confirm washing away of non-specific extract proteins and minimal washing away of the CBD-fusion protein.

**Induction of On-column Cleavage**

To release the target protein, on-column cleavage is induced by a thiol reagent. Induction of the on-column cleavage is conducted by quickly flushing the column with 3 bed volumes of the Cleavage Buffer, containing 50 mM DTT, to evenly distribute thiols throughout the column (Figure 4: Sample 7 - Determine cleavage during DTT wash). After the quick flush, stop the column flow and leave at 4–23°C for 16–40 hours (see Tables 1A and 1B). Before adding the thiol reagent, check cleavage efficiency by removing 100 μl of resin and mixing with 50 μl 3X SDS Sample Buffer. After boiling for 5 minutes, spin the resin down. The supernatant (3–10 μl) is directly used for SDS-PAGE analyses (Figure 4: Sample 6 - Chitin resin before cleavage).

If intein mediated protein ligation (IPL) or expressed protein ligation (EPL) is to be conducted, typically 2-mercaptoethanesulfonic acid (MESNA) is used as the thiol reagent to induce cleavage (Appendix I).

Several factors affect the cleavage efficiency and thus the final yield: (i) amino acid residue(s) at the cleavage site; (ii) temperature of the cleavage reaction; (iii) duration of the cleavage reaction; (iv) pH of the Cleavage Buffer.

Since cleavage is dependent on the protein structure, a single amino acid residue at the cleavage site is not the only determinant for efficient cleavage and only serves as a guideline. In most cases (see Tables 1A & 1B), incubation of the column at 16–23°C for 16 hours (overnight) results in more than 50% cleavage of the fusion precursor. When the C-terminal fusion vector (pTXB1) is used, the on-column cleavage reaction can be conducted at 4°C overnight. When the N-terminal fusion vector (pTYB21) is used, higher temperatures (16–23°C) and longer cleavage reaction times (40 hours) are normally required. The data in Tables 1A & 1B provide a guideline for selecting an appropriate temperature and duration for the cleavage reaction. The cleavage efficiency can be determined by SDS-PAGE by analyzing samples of the chitin resin after thiol cleavage (Figure 4: Sample 9 - chitin resin).

If most of the precursor is not cleaved, longer incubation time and higher temperature for the cleavage reaction are recommended.

**Elution of the Target Protein**

Following on-column cleavage, the target protein is eluted from the column using the Column Buffer. The intein-CBD tag remains bound to the resin. Fraction sizes of about one third of the column bed volume typically result in elution of the target protein within the first few fractions (Figure 4: Sample 8 - target protein).

The protein concentration in each fraction can be determined by the Bradford Assay, and the eluted fractions should be analyzed by SDS-PAGE. To check cleavage efficiency, remove 100 μl of resin and mix with 50 μl 3X SDS Sample Buffer. Boil for 5 minutes and spin the resin down. Analyze the supernatant (Figure 4: Sample 9 - chitin resin) by SDS-PAGE. If a large amount of the precursor still remains uncleaved, continue incubation of the column for an additional 12–24 hours before conducting a second elution.

**Stripping the Chitin Column**

Uncleaved fusion protein and the intein-tag remain bound to the chitin resin during elution and can be stripped from the resin by 0.3 N NaOH or column buffer containing 1% SDS. The elution should be conducted at room temperature to prevent the precipitation of the SDS. Since protein concentrations cannot be determined by the Bradford dye binding assay when SDS is present, the samples should be analyzed by SDS-PAGE.
Regeneration of the Chitin Resin

The chitin resin can be regenerated 4–5 times using the following protocol. Wash with 3 bed volumes of 0.3 M NaOH (stripping solution). Allow the resin to soak for 30 minutes and then wash with an additional 7 bed volumes of Stripping Solution. Rinse with 20 bed volumes of water followed by 5 bed volumes of Column Buffer. The resin can be stored at 4°C. For long term storage 0.02% sodium azide should be added to the Column Buffer.

Simplified Expression and Purification Protocol:

1. Transformation: Transform a competent *E. coli* T7 expression strain with your correct plasmid construct.
2. Cell Culture: Inoculate a freshly grown colony in LB medium containing 100 μg/ml ampicillin and grow the cells at 37°C. When the OD_{400} reaches 0.5, induce protein expression by adding IPTG to a final concentration of 0.4 mM, and incubate at 30–37°C.
3. Column Preparation: Equilibrate a chitin column (20 ml slurry for 1 liter culture) with 10 column volumes of Column Buffer [20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.5), 500 mM NaCl].
4. Cell Harvest: Centrifuge cell culture at 5,000 x g for 15 minutes at 4°C. Discard supernatant. Resuspend cell pellet in column buffer.
5. Loading: Break cells by sonication in Column Buffer and centrifuge at 15,000 x g for 30 minutes at 4°C. Slowly load the clarified lysate onto the chitin column (0.5–1.0 ml/minute).
6. Washing: Wash the column with at least 20 bed volumes of Column Buffer to thoroughly remove the unbound proteins (up to 2.0 ml/minute).
7. Adding Thiols: Quickly wash the column with 3 column volumes of Cleavage Buffer [Column buffer containing 50 mM DTT (for purification) or 50 mM MESNA (for IPL)].
8. On-column Cleavage: Stop the flow and incubate the column at 4°C–23°C for 16–40 hours. The temperature and duration of the cleavage reaction are dependent on the on-column cleavage efficiency, which can be checked by analyzing samples of chitin resin before and after cleavage.
9. Elution: Elute the target protein with Column Buffer by continuing the column flow.
10. Dialysis: Dialyze the target protein into an appropriate storage buffer; this will also remove the excess thiol reagent used in the Cleavage Buffer and the co-eluted small peptide (when using pTYB21).
11. Cleavage: To examine cleavage efficiency, remove 100 μl of chitin resin and mix with 50 μl of 3X SDS Sample Buffer. After boiling for 5 minutes, analyze the supernatant on a Coomassie stained SDS-PAGE gel to determine the cleavage efficiency.
12. Regeneration of Chitin Resin: Wash the column with 3 bed volumes of the 0.3 M NaOH (Stripping Solution). Allow the resin to soak for 30 minutes and wash the resin with an additional 7 bed volumes of 0.3 M NaOH. Wash with 20 bed volumes of water, followed by 5 bed volumes of column buffer.

Figure 4: Flow chart for Protein Expression and Purification using the IMPACT System. Sample collection for analysis by SDS-PAGE is indicated.
Media and Solutions:
The following are suggested media for cell culture, cell lysis and protein purification. They can be modified according to the specific properties of the target protein.

**LB broth** (per liter)
10 g tryptone
5 g yeast extract
10 g NaCl
Adjust pH to 7.0 with NaOH

**Column Buffer**
20 mM Na\-HEPES (or Tris-HCl), pH 8.5 500 mM NaCl (or 50–1,000 mM NaCl)
1 mM EDTA (optional) Nonionic detergents (0.1–0.5% Triton X-100 or 0.1–0.2% Tween 20) and protease inhibitors [e.g., PMSF (20 μM)] can also be included. For a target protein sensitive to oxidation, 1 mM of TCEP [tris-(2-carboxyethyl)phosphine] or TCCP [tris-(2-cyanoethyl)phosphine] may be used.

**Cleavage Buffer**
20 mM Na\-HEPES (or Tris-HCl), pH 8.5
500 mM NaCl (or 50–1,000 mM NaCl)
50 mM DTT or β-mercaptoethanol or cysteine*
1 mM EDTA (optional)
*(use 2-mercaptoethanesulfonic acid and HEPES buffer for IPL see Appendix 1, page 17)

**Stripping Solution**
0.3 M NaOH

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Cloning

*Which vector should I use?*
We routinely use pTXB1 with success. The mini-intein of bacterial origin usually allows for higher level of expression; however, we have not conducted a systematic scientific comparison between pTXB1 and the other IMPACT vectors.

pTXB1 allows for the fusion of the C-terminus of a target protein to the intein tag whereas with the pTYB21 vector, the N-terminus of the target protein is fused to the intein tag. It is conceivable that different target proteins, due to certain structural constraints, may prefer either a C-terminal or a N-terminal fusion to allow proper folding of the fusion precursor and for a high level of protein expression.

Check the "Guide to IMPACT Vectors and Applications" in our catalog and on our website. Since inteins exhibit different preferences for the amino acid at the cleavage site, the user should follow guidelines for choosing a vector based on the information given in Tables 1A and 1B. These tables are only a guide, since the folding of the entire fusion protein, not just a single amino acid, affects cleavage. Since each fusion protein varies in expression level and cleavage we often clone the target protein into more than one IMPACT vector.

If the purified target protein is also intended for intein mediated protein ligation (IPL), C-terminal labeling or peptide ligation, pTXB1 should be used.

If you wish to generate a target protein with a N-terminus other than methionine, you may use pTYB21 or the Intein1 (Ssp DnaB intein) in the pTWIN1 (NEB #N6951). A N-terminal cysteine can be generated for IPL using Intein1 (Ssp DnaB intein) in the pTWIN1 Vector, not pTYB21.

*How do I design primers with the SapI site?*
SapI (or its isoschizomer, BspQI) is a Type IIIs enzyme; it cuts outside its recognition sequence to give a staggered cut. To design the primer please refer to Table 2, **write out the cloning procedure** and it will be apparent how compatible ends between the vector and insert are generated. Further information is given in the IMPACT FAQ section on our website.

Expression

*What if I observe in vivo cleavage, where a band corresponding to intein-CBD, but not the fusion protein, is detected in the crude cell extract?*
First, to accurately assess the extent of in vivo cleavage, the samples should be prepared in SDS Sample Buffer without DTT or β-mercaptoethanol, since boiling in DTT-containing Sample Buffer may cause cleavage of the fusion protein (see note in Table 1A). If proteolysis is evident, try different hosts or include protease inhibitors. In vivo cleavage may be reduced by varying induction temperature. If necessary, perform a Western blot with anti-target protein serum to differentiate between proteolysis and intein-mediated cleavage.
Sometimes changing one or several residues between the target protein and the intein tag may reduce intein-mediated \textit{in vivo} cleavage. However, the purified target protein will contain extra residues after cleavage.

\textbf{What if the fusion protein is insoluble?}

If you have problems with solubility one of the first things to try is varying the induction temperature (15°C or lower; some experimentalists have used 8–12°C induction temperatures) and/or the concentration of IPTG (0.01 mM–0.4 mM).

- Different \textit{E. coli} T7 expression strains, such as T7 Express (NEB #C2566) and SHuffle T7 Express (NEB #C3029) can be tested for optimal soluble expression. The SHuffle strain has been shown to help soluble expression of some proteins with disulfide bonds.
- A fresh colony from an overnight plate may be necessary for optimal expression.
- Resuspend the cell pellet in at least 100 ml Column Buffer/L culture.
- During sonication, it is crucial to handle the sample cautiously. If the protein solution gets warm or the solution foams there is a possibility that the proteins are being denatured. Use an ice-chilled water bath to keep the cell suspension cool.
- If you wish to use a detergent in your Column and Cleavage Buffers, we recommend 0.1–0.5% Triton X-100 or 0.1–0.2% Tween-20. Too much detergent will impair binding to the chitin column.
- If the fusion is still insoluble you can use urea to resuspend the protein. If urea is used, several factors should be considered:
  1. The binding efficiency of the intein-tag to the chitin resin is lower at 4 M urea or higher.
  2. The intein-mediated cleavage reaction should be carried out in 0–2 M urea.
- The following refolding protocol has been successfully applied to the recovery of insoluble proteins
  1. Resuspend the cell pellet from 1 L of \textit{E. coli} culture in 100 ml Column Buffer.
  2. Lyse cells by sonication.
  3. Spin down cell debris containing the inclusion bodies at 15,000 g at 4°C for 30 minutes.
  4. Pour out supernatant and resuspend pellet in 100 ml Lysis Buffer.
  5. Stir solution for 1 hour at 4°C.
  6. Spin remaining cell debris down at 15,000 g and 4°C for 30 minutes.
  7. Load supernatant into dialysis bag and dialyze against Renaturation Buffer A, B, C, D and 2 times E. Each step is against 1 L of a renaturation buffer and should take at least 3 hours at 4°C. During dialysis the buffer should be continuously stirred.
  8. Centrifuge the dialyzed solution containing the renatured protein at 15,000 g and 4°C for 30 minutes to remove any remaining impurities or incorrectly folded protein which is again aggregated.
  9. Use a standard protocol for chitin chromatography and cleavage reaction. Elute the protein product and analyze both the eluate and chitin beads for cleavage efficiency and protein solubility.

\textbf{Solutions}

- \textbf{Column Buffer:} 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.5 and 0.5 M NaCl
- \textbf{Breaking Buffer:} 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.5, 0.5 M NaCl, 7M Guanidine-HCl
- \textbf{Renaturation Buffer A:} 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.5, 0.5 M NaCl, 8 M urea
- \textbf{Renaturation Buffer B:} 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.5, 0.5 M NaCl, 6 M urea
- \textbf{Renaturation Buffer C:} 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.5, 0.5 M NaCl, 4 M urea
- \textbf{Renaturation Buffer D:} 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.5, 0.5 M NaCl, 2 M urea, 0.1 mM oxidized glutathione, 1 mM reduced glutathione
- \textbf{Renaturation Buffer E:} 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.5, 0.5 M NaCl, 0.1 mM oxidized glutathione, 1 mM reduced glutathione

\textbf{Cleavage}

\textbf{What should I do if the fusion precursor is the major product on the chitin resin after target protein elution?}

This means that the thiol-induced on-column cleavage is not efficient – invariably leading to a low yield of the target protein. The following options can be tried to increase the cleavage efficiency: (a) increase the duration of the on-column cleavage (b) increase the temperature from 4°C to room temperature (c) increase the pH of the Cleavage Buffer to 8.5–9.0 (d) change the residue(s) adjacent to the intein cleavage site.

\textbf{What does it mean if the target protein is not eluted after on-column cleavage but is present on the chitin beads after target protein elution?}

If both the target protein and the intein tag are present on the chitin beads after elution, it suggests that the target protein becomes insoluble after induced on-column cleavage. Increase the salt concentration (0.5–2 M NaCl) or add a nonionic detergent to the Cleavage Buffer to
improve the solubility of the target protein. A number of nonionic detergents examined (0.1–0.5% Triton X-100 or 0.1–0.2% Tween 20) had little effect on binding or cleavage and may improve solubility. If urea is used to elute, some intein tag may co-elute with the target protein. In this case, it may be necessary to repurify and refold the target protein.

If my target protein is sensitive to DTT, are there alternative means to induce the on-column cleavage?

If the activity of the target protein is affected by high concentrations of DTT or β-mercaptoethanol, lower concentrations of DTT or β-mercaptoethanol (5–10 mM) may be used for on-column cleavage. However, longer incubation time or higher temperatures (up to room temperature) may be required for efficient cleavage. Alternatively, 50 mM of freshly prepared hydroxylamine (for pTXB1 at pH 6) or cysteine solution (at pH 8–9) can be used to induce cleavage at 4–25°C. Be aware that when hydroxylamine or cysteine is used with C-terminal IMPACT vectors (pTXB1), they form a stable covalent bond with the C-terminus of the target protein. One should determine whether a C-terminal hydroxamate or cysteine affects the activity of the target protein. When cysteine is used for cleavage with pTYB21, the cysteine is not attached to the target protein.

If you do not wish to use a thiol reagent for cleavage, the Intein1 (Ssp DnaB intein) in the pTWIN1 Vector may be used; cleavage is induced by temperature (room temperature) and/or pH shift (from pH 8.5 to 6).

How do I remove DTT after cleavage?

After elution of the target protein, free DTT can be removed from the sample by dialyzing at least twice against an appropriate buffer (at pH 8–9).

References

IMPACT User Publications:
Appendix I: Intein-mediated Protein Ligation (IPL) and Protein Labeling

The IPL reaction (3), also referred to as expressed protein ligation (7), allows the ligation of a bacterially expressed protein or a synthetic peptide with an N-terminal cysteine residue to a protein with a C-terminal thioester through a native peptide bond (Figure 5). In addition to protein purification, pTXB, and other C-terminal fusion vectors (pTYB and pTWIN series), can be used to generate a protein with a C-terminal thioester for IPL. Typically 2-mercaptoethanesulfonic acid (MESNA) is used as the thiol reagent to induce intein-mediated cleavage; this produces a C-terminal thioester on the target protein. The C-terminus of the target protein can then be covalently labeled or ligated to a synthetic peptide with an N-terminal cysteine.

The following protocol illustrates a typical ligation or labeling experiment:

1. One of the components should have a final concentration of at least 0.5–1 mM. For the ligation of a peptide to a protein we use 0.01 mM protein with 0.5–1 mM peptide.

2. Combine the components in the presence of 0.1 M Tris, pH 8.5 and 10 mM MESNA and incubate overnight at 4°C. Alternatively, the reaction can be incubated at 25°C for 1–4 hours.

3. The ligation may be visualized by a 10% or 12% SDS-PAGE as a shift in mobility of the ligated protein, or can easily be detected by Western blot using an antibody specific for the peptide. Though a purified peptide is not required, it can usually yield a higher ligation efficiency (75%–90%). Add 20 μl of 3X SDS Sample Buffer (with DTT) to 40 μl of the protein sample. Boil for 5 minutes and analyze by SDS-PAGE, with unligated protein as a control.

To label a protein with biotin or a fluorescent moiety, a peptide with an N-terminal cysteine and a biotinylated or fluorescenated residue can be used. After ligation the protein samples can be analyzed by SDS-PAGE and/or detected by Western blot.

For cleavage, HEPES buffer should be used (9). For long term storage of MESNA-tagged proteins, dialyze the protein into 5 mM Bis Tris, pH 6.5, 250 mM NaCl and store at −80°C.

For more information, please read our application note posted on our IMPACT Kit product web page.

Figure 5: Mechanism of intein-mediated protein ligation (IPL).
Appendix II: Cloning into pMXB10

The control vector pMXB10 encodes the fusion protein: maltose binding protein (MBP) – Mxe GyrA intein – Chitin Binding Domain (CBD). The polylinker regions flanking the coding region for MBP can conveniently be used to clone a gene of interest (Figure 6). The 5’ end of the target gene can be cloned into the NdeI, SapI or NcoI site. If the SapI or NcoI sites are used the primer should be designed so that the gene is in frame with the translational start in the NdeI site. For cloning the 3’ end of the gene the SacI, HindIII, NotI, EcoRI or XhoI site can be used; make sure that the target protein is in frame with the intein. However, after intein cleavage the target protein will contain additional amino acids at its C-terminus, including (LEY), which has been shown to have a high rate of successful cleavage. For the 3’ site you may also use the SpeI site, present near the N-terminus of the Mxe GyrA intein, by designing a primer that contains the intein sequence; this can result in a fusion without any vector-derived residues following cleavage.

You could also use the NEBuilder HiFi DNA Assembly (NEB #E5520) or Gibson Assembly Cloning Kit (NEB #E5510) to generate your construct. The advantage of these methods is that they are not dependent on restriction enzyme sites, and can be used in all cases regardless of the presence or absence of restriction sites in your target gene. Please refer to our Gibson Assembly Cloning Kit FAQs on the web for further details.

Figure 6: pMXB10 vector and multiple cloning site.

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