The *in vivo* mechanics of the magnetotactic backbone as revealed by correlative FLIM-FRET and STED microscopy

- 4 Erika Günther1, André Klauβ2,4, Mauricio Toro-Nahuelpan3,5, Dirk Schüler3, Carsten Hille2,6,
 5 Damien Faivre1,7,*
- Department of Biomaterials, Max Planck Institute of Colloids and Interfaces, Science Park Golm, 14424
 Potsdam, Germany
- 8 2Physical Chemistry, Institute of Chemistry, University of Potsdam, 14476 Potsdam, Germany
- 9 3Department of Microbiology, University Bayreuth, 95447 Bayreuth, Germany
- 10 4Present address: HOLOEYE Photonics AG, 12489 Berlin, Germany
- 11 5Present address: European Molecular Biology Laboratory, 69117 Heidelberg, Germany
- 12 6Present address: Technical University of Applied Sciences Wildau, 15745 Wildau, Germany
- 13 7Aix Marseille University, CEA, CNRS, BIAM, 13108 Saint Paul-Lez-Durance, France
- 14 * e-mail: damien.faivre@mpikg.mpg.de.

15 Supplementary information

16 Control experiments

We acquired two consecutive FLIM-FRET and STED images of the same cells. First, we verified 17 changes in distance between MamJ-phiYFP and TagRFP657-MamK using FLIM-FRET and in the 18 19 structure of the filament of TagRFP657-MamK by STED microscopy. The bacteria are embedded 20 in an agarose matrix to keep them alive, but also to prevent them from being able to freely move 21 and in particular rotate. We performed FLIM-FRET and STED microscopy on a bacterium and 22 after 20 min regeneration period, the same procedure was repeated on the same cell. Supplementary Figure 2a shows the STED image of three cells (TagRFP675-MamK filaments). Supplementary 23 24 Figure 2b shows the identical cells after 20 min regeneration period. Both images display consistent and straight filaments. 25

In addition, using equation (1), we calculated the FRET efficiency at the beginning of the 26 experiment $E = 78 \pm 5\%$ (n = 14 cells, N = 10 images, 2 independent experiments / imaging of 27 different cultures and at different days). After 20 min regeneration period, the FRET efficiency is 28 $E = 82 \pm 3\%$ (n = 13 cells, N = 10 images, 2 independent experiments). The calculated distance 29 30 between the donor phiYFP and acceptor TagRFP657 using equation (4) is $r = 3.7 \pm 0.2$ nm (n = 14, N = 10) and $r = 3.4 \pm 0.2$ nm (n = 13, N = 10) for the repeated measurement after 20 min. The 31 32 FLIM-FRET results demonstrate that the distance of MamJ-phiYFP and TagRFP657-MamK 33 change slightly during STED imaging and the 20 min regeneration period in a range of $\Delta r = 0.3$ nm, which is statistically significant (P < 0.01), but physiologically not relevant. 34 35 Additionally, the STED images of the TagRFP657-MamK filament are similar (see also 36 Supplementary Figure S2).

38 Measured fluorescence decay times, calculated FRET efficiencies and donor-acceptor 39 distances

We measured the fluorescence decay time (τ) of the donor phiYFP in presence and absence of the 40 acceptor TagRFP657 by time-correlated single-photon counting (TCSPC). Decay curves from 41 MamJ-phiYFP strains were successfully fitted ($\chi_R^2 = 1.28$) to a single-exponential decay function 42 with a resulting decay time $\tau D = 2.95$ ns. Decay curves of MamJ-phiYFP + TagRFP657-MamK 43 strains show a faster decay compared to the MamJ-phiYFP strains. We quantified this decay 44 behavior by a bi-exponential decay function ($\chi_R^2 = 1.10$), determining the interacting and non-45 interacting donor populations, resulting in a second decay time $\tau_{DA} = 0.56$ ns (with a fixed decay 46 time $\tau D = 2.94$ ns). Supplementary Tab. 1 summarizes the calculated fluorescence decay times of 47 the donor phiYFP of different MSR-1 strains and statistical analysis. No significant change is 48 observed between the fluorescence decay times τD of MamJ-phiYFP and phiYFP + TagRFP657-49 50 MamK constructs. Thus, the presence of donor and acceptor fluorescent proteins alone is not sufficient for FRET events. However, in the presence of donor and acceptor fluorescent proteins 51 fused to MamJ and MamK, the fluorescence decay times decrease significantly, but independent 52 of the mechanical treatment (see also Supplementary Tab. 1). 53

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55 Energy transfer between MamJ-phiYFP and TagRFP657-MamK

56 MamJ-phiYFP + TagRFP657-MamK was excited up to 4 times longer than MamJ-phiYFP or

57 phiYFP + TagRFP657 to get sufficient counts for analyzing, indicating the successful energy

- transfer from the donor (phiYFP) in presence of the acceptor (TagRFP657). On the other hand,
- 59 direct acceptor excitation with the same power at 635 nm did not result in increased acceptor

intensity in MamJ-phiYFP + TagRFP657-MamK due to the low quantum yield (0.1) of
TagRFP657.

62

63 **Fitting procedure**

When applying time-resolved donor fluorescence measurements for studying FRET interactions, 64 the measurements provide access to non-interacting and interacting fractions of the donor 65 molecules - a benefit compared to intensity-based FRET recordings. Thus, the standard procedure 66 is then divided into two steps1. First, the donor fluorescence decay time is recorded alone (τD) and 67 68 subsequently in the presence of the acceptor (τD) . Figure 1a shows the mono-exponential decay behavior of the donor alone (yielding τ_D with χ_R^2 -values of 1.28, Supplementary Fig. S11). In the 69 70 presence of donor and acceptor without interaction (control), the donor decay is not changed (still mono-exponential decay behavior), indicating the absence of influence of the fluorescent acceptor 71 72 on the donor (see Supplementary Tab. S3, second row, added Supplementary Fig. S14).

73 However, in the case of a possible interaction between donor and acceptor, we clearly saw a multiexponential donor fluorescence decay behavior (see Figure 1, Supplementary Fig. S14). Since we 74 only detected donor molecules, the simplest way was to assume non-interacting and interacting 75 donor molecules. Since non-interacting donor exhibited a mono-exponential decay time of 2.95 ns 76 77 (which did not change under the presence of non-interaction acceptor), we fixed this value (only the time component, but not the fractional contribution). The second time component then 78 79 corresponded to the interacting donor with reduced decay time originating from the energy transfer to the acceptor. Thus, bi-exponential decay fitting with only one fixed time component resulted 80 81 then in the second time component (indicating the FRET efficiency) and in the fractional contribution (indicating the amount of interacting donor relative to all available donor molecules). 82

The determined IRF value (460 ps) falls within common range for this type of experimental setup (and is mainly determined by the SPAD-detector timing₂. Theoretically, temporal resolutions down to 1/10 of the IRF can be reached, but in practice values of $\frac{1}{2}$ of the IRF are realistic and distinguishable₃. Thus, the time components we obtained could be analyzed with sufficient accuracy. In addition, the residuals and χ_R^2 -values indicated a reliable fitting procedure.

88

89 Autofluorescence contribution

A significant fluorescence signal under the chosen experimental conditions could not be observed
in cells lacking the donor or acceptor (Supplementary Fig. S1c, e). Thus, autofluorescence was
neglected.

93

94 STED microscopy on MamK filaments

95 After one STED round, we observed a certain structure, but the image had an insufficient quality 96 (in term of counts). Accordingly, we waited 20 min in order to compare two consecutive STED 97 images/ filaments. In the interval, the structure is likely reformed since, after 20 min of regeneration 98 time, we observed again a fluorescence signal. We hypothesized the new fluorescent filament 99 originated from treadmilling. We therefore concluded that the cells were still alive and that no 96 significant phototoxicity took place.

101

102 High FRET efficiencies, collection of photons

Supplementary Tab. S3 shows that approximately 73 % to 81 % are interacting donor molecules.
In general, not all donor molecules are able to interact with the acceptor1. However, upon the
presence of a dynamic and intact MamK filament, or a stiff and static filament, the MamJ turnover
remains constant4. Consequently, the dynamic behavior of MamJ is independent of MamK and is

proposed to only transiently interact with MamK. The half time of recovery of MamJ fusion 107 proteins after photobleaching is approximately 10 s 4 and thus indicates a transient MamJ-MamK 108 interaction < 20 s 4. All photons were collected in an image obtained within approximately 50 s for 109 110 the fluorescence decay fitting in the FLIM-FRET analysis, since faster point and line scans resulted in insufficient photon statistics. Consequently, short time interactions are averaged out for 111 numerical FRET analysis. However, during the scanning process, interacting and non-interacting 112 113 donor populations were visualized. On the one hand, free MamJ and MamK in the cytoplasm could result in this occurrence. On the other hand, under the assumption that the MamJ-MamK 114 interactions are < 20 s, an inhomogeneous decay time distribution in a FLIM image recorded within 115 50 s could be considered. Hence, this distribution would reflect the non-synchronized and transient 116 interaction in a bacterium, as observed in the presented results. 117

118

119 Normalization of TagRFP657 fluorescence intensities

The images were normalized to maximum count value for comparison. Indeed, the counts refer as arbitrary unit to the recorded fluorescence intensity per pixel (Figure 4c: 0 - 84 counts per pixel, normalized to 84 counts = 1). Nevertheless, the changed intensities did not totally refer to bleaching, but also to slight changes in position and / or focus, to changed protein expression and/ or distribution, and to variations due to the microscope setup, since we measured in sub-diffraction space. Still, the counts were high enough to produce a meaningful image.

126

127 Plasmid construction

Plasmids were constructed by amplifying the DNA fragments of interest with the Phusion High
Fidelity DNA Polymerase (Thermo Scientific). Plasmid description and oligonucleotides are listed

in Supplementary Tab. 5 to 7, respectively (see below). Plasmids were introduced into *M*. *gryphiswaldense* by conjugation.

To generate pMT092, the *phiYFP* gene (Evrogen) was amplified with the oligonucleotides oMTN292 and oMTN293. Subsequently, the *phiYFP* fragment was *Hind*III-*Bam*HI digested and ligated into the identically digested pMT082 vector.

To construct pMT093, the *TagRFP657* (Addgene) gene was amplified (oMTN294-295) and further
cloned into the vector pMT080 under the control of the *mamAB* operon promoter (P*mamAB*) using
the restriction sites *NdeI-Eco*RI.

Plasmid pMT094 was created by amplifying the *mamK* gene (oMTN045-296) and subsequently
cloned into pMT093 by using the *Hind*III-*Bam*HI restriction sites.

For creation of pMT095, the *TagRFP657-mamK* fragment was amplified (oMTN297-298) and *BamHI-XhoI* digested to be cloned into identically digested pMT092 vector.

For construction of pMT107, the *phiYFP* + *TagRFP657-mamK* fragment was amplified
(oMTN353-355) and cloned into pMT094 using the *NdeI-Bam*HI restriction sites.

Finally, to construct pMT108, the vector pMT107 was *Bam*HI-*Xho*I digested. Subsequently, blunt
ends were generated and further re-ligated (in addition see Supplementary Tab. 5 - 7).

146 The fusions MamJ-phiYFP, TagRFP657-MamK, and MamJ-phiYFP + TagRFP657-MamK 147 rescued the phenotypes of the $\Delta mamJ$, $\Delta mamK$, and $\Delta mamJK$ strains, respectively, which 148 exhibited wild type-like magnetosomes chains (data not shown). This means that the fusions are 149 functional.





Supplementary Figure S1: Fluorescence lifetime and fluorescence intensity images of MamJphiYFP, TagRFP657-MamK and MamJ-phiYFP + TagRFP657-MamK in the phiYFP

channel and TagRFP657 channel. The first row shows MSR-1 cells with only MamJ-phiYFP (a-155 c) with the fluorescence lifetime image of the phiYFP-channel colored in yellow (a) indicating a 156 long donor decay time. The fluorescence intensity image is colored in cyan (b). The second row 157 illustrates MSR-1 cells with only TagRFP657-MamK (d-f) with the fluorescence lifetime image of 158 the TagRFP657-channel colored in blue (d) indicating a short acceptor decay time. The 159 fluorescence intensity image is colored in purple (f). The third and fourth row shows MSR-1 cells 160 161 with TagRFP657-MamK and phiYFP (g-l) with the fluorescence lifetime image of the phiYFPchannel colored in yellow (g) indicating a long donor decay time and with the fluorescence lifetime 162 image of the TagRFP657-channel colored in blue (j) indicating a short acceptor decay time. The 163 fluorescence intensity of phiYFP is colored in cyan (h) and the fluorescence intensity of 164 TagRFP657 is colored in purple (1). The fifth row shows MSR-1 cells with MamJ-phiYFP and 165 TagRFP657-MamK (m-o) with the fluorescence lifetime image of the phiYFP-channel (m), in 166 which green colors indicate the reduced donor decay time due to energy transfer. The fluorescence 167 intensity of phiYFP is colored in cyan (n) and the fluorescence intensity of TagRFP657 is colored 168 169 in purple (o).



172 Supplementary Figure S2: STED images of MSR-1 cells expressing MamJ-

173 phiYFP + TagRFP657-MamK. The fluorescence intensity of TagRFP657 was recorded,

indicating the filament TagRFP657-MamK. First image scan (a) second image scan after 20 min

regeneration period (b). Scale bar: 1 μm.



Supplementary Figure S3: *In vivo* FLIM-FRET and STED experiments on MSR-1 cells before
and after magnetic field rotation. FLIM images (a, b) and STED images (c, d) of MSR-1 cells
with MamJ-phiYFP + TagRFP657-MamK before (a, c) and after (b, d) applying a magnetic field.
(e, f) Corresponding 3D surface intensity plots of the STED images. For a better illustration, we
normalized the intensity and used a Gaussian filter.



Supplementary Figure S4: *In vivo* FLIM-FRET and STED experiments on MSR-1 cells before
and after magnetic field rotation. FLIM images (a, b) and STED images (c, d) of MSR-1 cells
with MamJ-phiYFP + TagRFP657-MamK before (a, c) and after (b, d) applying a magnetic field.
(e, f) Corresponding 3D surface intensity plots of the STED images. For a better illustration, we
normalized the intensity and used a Gaussian filter.



Supplementary Figure S5: **Timeline of the image acquisition.** (a) The FLIM image recording time is approx. 60 s followed by approx. 50 s for the STED imaging. In between is a short break of approx. 30 s to change the setting for the next measurement. This procedure is repeated after a 20 min regeneration period and the magnetic treatment. (b) Immediately after the regeneration period and the magnetic treatment, the STED image was recorded followed by the FLIM image acquisition.

198 The FRET efficiency did not change after magnetic treatment. Therefore, we changed the order of 199 the image acquisition to reduce the time for the *de novo* synthesis of MamK.

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202 Supplementary Figure S6: **STED images of filament fragments after rotating a magnetic field**

and chemical fixing of the cells with 4% PFA. Scale bar: 1 µm.



- 206 Supplementary Figure S7: **STED images of filament fragments after rotating a magnetic field**
- and chemical fixing of the cells with 4% PFA. Scale bar: 1 μ m.



212 Supplementary Figure S8: **TEM images of chain fragments after rotating a magnetic field and**

213 chemical fixing of the cells with 4% PFA. Scale bar: 1 μ m.



Supplementary Figure S9: Absorption (dashed lines) and emission (solid lines) of phiYFP
(cyan) and TagRFP657 (purple) as well as transmission curves of the chosen filters (black)
for FLIM-FRET and STED experiments.



Supplementary Figure S10: Area-normalized emission spectrum of phiYFP (black), molar absorption spectrum of TagRFP657 (red) and resulting overlap function indicating the spectral overlap integral $J(\lambda)$.



Supplementary Figure S11: *In vivo* FLIM-FRET analysis in MSR-1 cells with MamJ-phiYFP.
A representative phiYFP (donor) fluorescence decay curve was measured by time-correlated
single-photon counting (TCSPC) in MSR-1 expressing MamJ-phiYFP (red data points). For
MamJ-phiYFP, the data was fitted to a single-exponential deconvolution fitting model (blue),

- yielding the decay time $\tau D = 2.95$ ns. The instrument response function (IRF) is shown in grey. The
- amplitude (α) is 1.0. The corresponding χ_R^2 is displayed below (1.28).



Supplementary Figure S12: *In vivo* FLIM-FRET analysis in MSR-1 cells with MamJ-phiYFP
 and TagFRP657-MamK. A representative fluorescence decay curve was measured by time correlated single-photon counting (TCSPC) in MSR-1 expressing MamJ-phiYFP and TagRFP657-

MamK (red data points). The data was fitted to a bi-exponential deconvolution fitting model (blue line), yielding the decay time $\tau D = 2.94$ ns and an amplitude (αD) of 0.25 along with $\tau DA = 0.56$ ns and an amplitude (αDA) of 0.75. The instrument response function (IRF) is shown in grey. The corresponding χ_R^2 is displayed below (1.05).



Supplementary Figure S13: *In vivo* FLIM-FRET analysis in MSR-1 cells with MamJ-phiYFP
 and TagFRP657-MamK. A representative fluorescence decay curve measured by time-correlated
 single-photon counting (TCSPC) in MSR-1 expressing MamJ-phiYFP and TagRFP657-MamK

249	(red data points). The data was fitted to a single-exponential deconvolution fitting model (blue
250	line), yielding the decay time $\tau_D = 1.84$ ns and an amplitude (α_D) of 1.0. The instrument response
251	function (IRF) is shown in grey. The corresponding χ_R^2 is displayed below (3.47).
252	
253	The fitting of the decay curve using a bi-exponential deconvolution fitting model resulted in a
254	better χ^2_R . Thus we used the bi-exponential deconvolution fitting model for MSR-1 cells expressing

255 MamJ-phiYFP and TagRFP657-MamK.

256





- 263 points). The data was fitted to a single-exponential deconvolution fitting model (blue), yielding the
- decay time $\tau D = 2.89$ ns and an amplitude (αD) of 1.0. The instrument response function (IRF) is
- shown in grey. The corresponding χ_R^2 is displayed below (1.4).

267 Supplementary tables

268 Supplementary Table S1: Full-width at half maximum (FHWM) of confocal and STED

Bacterium	Confocal [nm]	STED [nm]
Figure 1d	264	60
Supplementary Figure S4c	220	66
Supplementary Figure S4c	217	63
4*	233	84
5*	200	75
6*	261	54
7*	225	77
8*	202	102
9*	203	73
10*	207	80

269 fluorescence image of TagRFP657-MamK filaments.

*Images are not shown.

270

The FWHM was determined at the center of the cell. The mean FHWM of the confocal fluorescence images of MamK-TagRFP657 is 223 ± 23 nm and was significantly reduced to 73 ± 24 nm in STED fluorescence images (P < 2 · 10-7).

275 Supplementary Table S2: Determined area of the MamK filament before and after a 20 minute

276 regeneration period.

Filament	<i>I</i> F before magnetic treatment	<i>I</i> F after magnetic treatment	
Supplementary Figure S2	0.533	0.501	
Supplementary Figure S2	0.369	0.366	
Supplementary Figure S2	0.591	0.522	
4*	0.477	0.442	
5*	0.527	0.397	
6*	0.49	0.491	
7*	0.486	0.393	
8*	0.376	0.337	
9*	0.470	0.479	
10*	0.446	0.429	
*Images of the filaments are not shown.			

278 Supplementary Table S3: Fluorescence decay times of the donor phiYFP, FRET efficiencies

279 (E) and donor-acceptor distances (r) in MSR-1 strains, together with their standard

deviations (SD) as well as number of bacteria and cultures and statistical analysis.

Constructs	$ au_{D} \pm SD$ [ns] #	$ au_{DA} \pm SD$ [ns] #	Statistical analysis §	<i>E</i> ± SD [%]	r ± SD [nm]	Bacteria	Indepen- dent cultures
MamJ-phiYFP	$2.94 \pm 0.07 \\ (1.00)$					9	1
phiYFP + TagRFP657-MamK	$2.97 \pm 0.08 \\ (1.00)$					34	3
MamJ-phiYFP + TagRFP657-MamK (before mechanical treatment)	2.94 (0.27±0.10)	$\begin{array}{c} 0.56 \pm 0.13 \\ (0.73 \pm 0.10) \end{array}$		81 ± 4	3.6 ± 0.2	72	7
MamJ-phiYFP + TagRFP657-MamK (after mechanical treatment)	2.94 (0.19 ± 0.10)	$\begin{array}{c} 0.46 \pm 0.17 \\ (0.81 \pm 0.10) \end{array}$		84 ± 5	3.4 ± 0.2	45	5

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282 # Mean amplitudes $\alpha_i \pm SD$ of the respective decay time components τ_i of single- and bi-exponential decay analyses

are presented in parentheses.

\$ Due to non-normality (D'Agostino and Pearson omnibus normality test, P > 0.05) data were analyzed using a

285 Kruskal-Wallis test followed by Dunn's multiple comparison tests as indicated. n.s.: non-significant, *** P < 0.001.

287 Supplementary Table S4: Determined area of the MamK filament before and after applying a

288 magnetic torque.

Filament	<i>I</i> F before magnetic treatment	<i>I</i> F after magnetic treatment	
Figure 3c and d	0.564	0.483	
Supplementary Figure S3a and d	0.472	0.475	
Supplementary Figure S4a and d	0.471	0.358	
4*	0.519	0.262	
5*	0.390	0.358	
6*	0.317	0.270	
7*	0.472	0.318	
8*	0.576	0.403	
9*	0.410	0.338	
10*	0.380	0.341	
*Images of the filaments are not shown.			

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Strain*	Genotype or characteristics	Reference or source
M. gryphiswaldense		
MSR WT	Wild-type MSR-1 R3/S1 (Rifr, Smr).	5
$\Delta mam J$	$\Delta mam J$	6
$\Delta mam K$	$\Delta mam K$	7
$\Delta mamJK$	$\Delta mam JK$	4
MamJ-phiYFP	MSR WT, conjugated with pMT092, KmR	This work
TagRFP657-MamK	MSR WT, conjugated with pMT094, Kmr	This work
MamJ- phiYFP + TagRFP657- MamK	MSR WT, conjugated with pMT095, Kmr	This work
phiYFP + TagRFP657- MamK	MSR WT, conjugated with pMT107, KmR	This work
phiYFP	MSR WT, conjugated with pMT108, KmR	This work
$\Delta mamJ + MamJ-phiYFP$	$\Delta mamJ$, conjugated with pMT092, Kmr	This work
∆ <i>mamK</i> + TagRFP657- MamK	$\Delta mam K$, conjugated with pMT094, KmR	This work
∆ <i>mamJK</i> + MamJ- phiYFP + TagRFP657- MamK	$\Delta mamJK$, conjugated with pMT095, KmR	This work
E. coli		
DH5a	Host for cloning. F- φ80lacZΔM15 Δ(lacZYA-argF) U169 recA1 endA1 hsdR17 (rK-, mK+) phoA supE44 λ-thi-1 gyrA96 relA1	Invitrogen
WM3064	Host for cloning and conjugation. thrB1004 pro thi rpsL hsdS lacZ Δ M15 RP4-1360 Δ (araBAD)567 Δ dapA1341::[erm pir (wt)]	W. Metcalf, (unpublished)

291 Supplementary Table S5: Bacterial strains generated and used in this study.

Plasmid	Relevant characteristics	Reference or source	
pBBR1-MCS2	Replicative backbone vector for in trans	8	
	gene expression in MSR. <i>ori</i> T, mob, Kmr	0	
pMT080	pBBR1-MCS2 based vector, Kmr,	4	
P	$P_{mamAB}-\alpha$ -helix (linker)		
pMT082	pBBR1-MCS2 based vector, Kmr,	4	
philodz	PmamAB-mamJ-dendra2	+	
pMT092	pMT082 derivative, PmamAB-mamJ-phiYFP	This work	
pMT093	pMT080 derivative, PmamAB-RFP657-linker	This work	
pMT094	pMT093 derivative, PmamAB-TagRFP657-mamK	This work	
pMT095	pMT092 derivative, PmamAB-mamJ-phiYFP_TagRFP657-mamK	This work	
pMT107	pMT095 derivative, PmamAB-phiYFP_TagRFP657-mamK	This work	
pMT108	pMT107 derivative, PmamAB-phiYFP	This work	

293 Supplementary Table S6: **Plasmids generated and used in this study.**

Name	Sequence $5' \rightarrow 3'$	Remarks
oMTN045	agactaGGATCCTCACTGACCGGAAACGTCACCAAGC	Overhang, BamHI
oMTN292	agactaAAGCTTATGAGCAGCGGCGCCCTGCT	Overhang, HindIII
0MTN293	agactaGGATCCTCACAGGTAGGTCTTGCGGCAATCC	Overhang, BamHI
oMTN294	agactaCATATGAGCGAGCTGATTACCGAGAACATGC	Overhang, NdeI
oMTN295	agactaGAATTCATTCAGCTTGTGCCCCAGTTTGCTAGG	Overhang, EcoRI
oMTN296	agactaAAGCTTATGAGTGAAGGTGAAGGCCAGGCC	Overhang, HindIII
oMTN297	agactaGGATCCctgacccttgaattaaggacaacagcgATGAGCGAGCTGATTACCGAGAACATGC	Overhang, BamHI, Lowercases: mamC intergenic region
oMTN298	agactaCTCGAGTCACTGACCGGAAACGTCACCAAGCTG	Overhang, XhoI
oMTN353	agactaCATATGAGCAGCGGCGCCCTGCT	Overhang, NdeI
oMTN355	agactaCTCGAGTCACTGACCGGAAACGTCACCAAGC	Overhang, XhoI

295 Supplementary Table S7: Oligonucleotides used in this work.

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