Engineering bacterial two-component system to construct novel fumarate sensing recombinant Escherichia coli

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DcuS/DcuR two component system (TCS) was firstly employed for the expression of the gfp gene under the dcuB gene promoter in aerobic condition to develop high throughput screening system able to screen microorganisms producing high amount of fumarate. However, the DcuS/DcuR TCS could not produce a signal strong enough to mediate the expression of the gfp gene responding fumarate concentration. Thus, DcuS/DucR TCS was engineered by recruiting the EnvZ/OmpR system, the most-studied TCS in E. coli.. A chimeric DcuS/EnvZ (DcuSZ) TCS was constructed by fusing the sensor histidine kinase of DcuS with the cytoplasmic catalytic domain of EnvZ, in which the expression of the ompC gene was mediated by the ompC gene promoter through the cognate response regulator, OmpR. The output signals were enough to detect fumarate concentration quantatively, in which the expressions of the gfp gene and the ompC gene were proportional to the fumarate concentration in the medium. Moreover, principal component analysis of C4-dicarboxylates showed that DcuSZ chimera was highly specific to fumarate. This work was supported by a grant from the Next-Generation BioGreen 21 Program (SSAC, grant number: PJ00954904) by RDA, and Basic Science Research Program by the MEST (2011-0022392).