Supplementary information

Genetic modification of *E. coli* strain.

For immune fluorescence detection of bacteria, a pBBR-derived non-mobilisable plasmid carrying a GFP expression cassette was introduced into NECS19923, a clinical strain isolated from a patient. The plasmid was made as follows (personal communication, A. Vergunst): the GFP*mut3* gene was amplified from pBBR1-KGFP[1] using primers GFP1 (5'- CCCAAGCTTCATATGAGTAAAGGAGAAGAAC; *Hind*III site underlined; *Nde*I site bold) and GFP2 (5'-GCTCTAGACTATTTGTATAGTTCATCC; *Xba*I site underlined), and cloned as *Hind*III-*Xba*I fragment in pUC21[2] resulting in pIN64. The *tac* promoter region was amplified from pFLAG-CTC (Sigma-Aldrich) using primers tac1 (5'-AATCTGCAGGAGCTGTTGACAATTAATC; *Pst*I site underlined) and tac2 (5'-GGAATTCCATATGAGATCTTCCTGTGTGAAATTG; *Nde*I site underlined). The PCR fragment was digested with *Pst*I/*Nde*I and, together with an *Xba*I-*Nde*I (partial) fragment of pIN64, cloned into a non-mobilisable derivative of pBBR1 MCS[3]. To construct this derivative, the *mob*/*oriT* region in pBBR1 MCS was removed by digesting the plasmid with *BstB*I(partial) and *Nar*I and re-ligating the vector backbone, resulting in plasmid pIN10. In addition, a strong transcription termination signal from TrpA was introduced into pIN10 as a *Sph*I-*Kpn*I fragment using linkers trpA1 (5'-CTAGTAGCCCGCCTAATGAGCGGGCTTTTTTTTGGTAC) and trpA2 (5'-CAAAAAAAAGCCCGCTCATTAGGCGGGCTA), resulting in pIN32. The final plasmid pIN25 highly expresses GFP in a wide range of bacteria.

1. S. Köhler , S. Ouahrani-Bettache, M. Layssac, J. Teyssier and J.P. Liautard., Infect Immun. 1999, 67, 6695-6697.
2. J. Vieira and J. Messing, Gene, 1991, 100, 189-194.
3. M.E. Kovach, R.W. Phillips, P.H. Elzer, R.M. Roop 2nd and K.M. Peterson, Biotechniques, 1994, 16, 800-802.