

Cyan-to-green photoswitchable fluorescent protein PS-CFP2

- **Monomer, successful performance in fusions**
- **Irreversible photoconversion from a cyan to a green fluorescent form**
- **High contrast of photoconversion**
- **High pH stability allowing labeling of acidic organelles**
- **Recommended for tracking cell, organelle, and protein movement, and for determination of protein half-life**

PS-CFP2 is an improved mutant of the photoswitchable monomeric fluorescent protein PS-CFP (Chudakov *et al.*, 2004). PS-CFP was obtained from *Aequorea coerulescens* colorless GFP-like protein (Gurskaya *et al.*, 2003). As compared with PS-CFP, PS-CFP2 comprises S108T, M153V, and T154A substitutions, which lead to a much faster maturation and a brighter fluorescence both before and after photoswitching.

PS-CFP2 is capable of irreversible photoconversion from cyan to green fluorescent form in response to 405 nm light irradiation. It is recommended for real-time *in vivo* tracking movement of cells, organelles, and individual proteins (Chudakov *et al.*, 2007). It can also be applied for determination of protein half-life (Zhang *et al.*, 2007). In addition, PS-CFP2 can be used as a routine cyan fluorescent tag (excitation maximum at 400 nm and emission maximum at 468 nm) at moderate excitation intensities and as a donor in FRET applications (Souslova and Chudakov, 2006).

Main properties of PS-CFP2

Molecular weight	27 kDa	
Polypeptide length	238 aa	
Structure	monomer	
Aggregation	no	
Maturation rate at 37°C	fast	
Activating light	UV-violet (e.g. 400 nm)	
Contrast, fold	up to 2000	
	before photo- conversion	after photo- conversion
Fluorescence color	cyan	green
Excitation max	400 nm	490 nm
Emission max	468 nm	511 nm
Quantum yield	0.20	0.23
Extinction coefficient, M ⁻¹ cm ⁻¹	43 000	47 000
Brightness*	8.6	10.8
pKa	4.3	6.1

*Brightness is a product of extinction coefficient and quantum yield, divided by 1000.

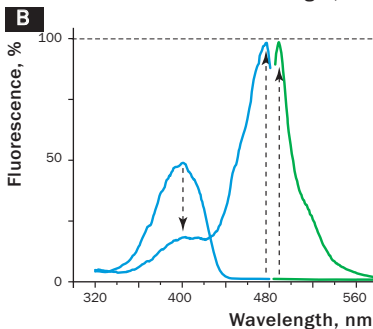
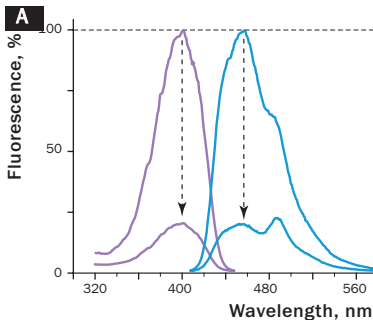
Performance and use

PS-CFP2 can be easily expressed and detected in a wide range of organisms. Mammalian cells transiently transfected with PS-CFP2 expression vectors display an evenly distributed cyan signal without aggregation within 12-20 hrs after transfection. No cell toxic effects are observed.

PS-CFP2 successful performance in fusions has been proven using cytoplasmic beta-actin, BH3 interacting domain death agonist (BID), nucleolar protein fibrillarin, and dopamin transporter (hDAT) models.

PS-CFP2 fluorescence spectra before (A) and after (B) complete photoactivation *in vitro*.

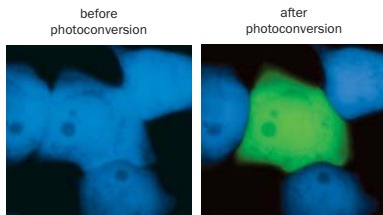
Spectral changes in the course of photoactivation are shown with arrows. A - Graphs show emission spectra in 400 nm excitation light (blue lines) and excitation spectra for 468 nm emission (violet lines); B - graphs show emission spectra in 490 nm excitation light (green lines) and excitation spectra for 511 nm emission (blue lines). Complete PS-CFP2 spectra in Excel format can be downloaded from the Evrogen Web site at www.evrogen.com/PS_CFP2.shtml.



High pH stability: Before photoactivation, PS-CFP2 exhibits a high pH stability with a pKa of 4.3. No changes were observed either in the shape or in the amplitude of fluorescence spectra within a pH range of 5.0 and 9.0. This makes it possible to target PS-CFP2 to acidic organelles such as endosomes and lysosomes. After photoswitching, PS-CFP2 has a pKa of 6.1, similar to that of other GFP-like proteins with a phenolate anion chromophore such as EGFP.

High contrast of photoconversion: In response to intense 400 nm light irradiation, PS-CFP2 undergoes irreversible photoconversion expressed in a decrease in cyan fluorescence and appearance of a 490 nm excitation peak with emission maximum at 511 nm. After complete photoconversion, green fluorescence of PS-CFP2 increases more than 400 times, whereas the level of cyan fluorescence becomes more than 5.5 times lower. The ratio of green fluorescence of the activated and inactivated form is four times higher for PS-CFP2 than for PA-GFP (Patterson and Lippincott-Schwartz, 2002). Unlike that of PA-GFP, emission spectrum of PS-CFP2 changes completely, switching from cyan to green fluorescence. This makes it possible to calculate an increase in the green-to-cyan fluorescence ratio which accounts for more than a 2000-fold contrast. Considerable decrease of cyan fluorescence during PS-CFP2 photoconversion provides a molecular tool to simultaneously

PS-CFP2 photoconversion in transiently transfected mammalian cells.



Central cell expressing PS-CFP2 was irradiated by intense 405 nm light that resulted in PS-CFP2 photoswitching. Before photoswitching no detectable green fluorescence at FITC excitation was seen in cells expressing PS-CFP2. In contrast, high-level signal was observed in cyan channel. Upon irradiation with a 10-15 micro Joules (about 20-30 W/cm²) violet dye laser (405 nm) for a few seconds a fluorescence increase of more than 300-fold was observed in FITC channel.

track both the movement of the photoactivated protein and its replacement with the non-activated form.

Recommended antibodies, filter sets, and visualization parameters

Antibodies: PS-CFP2 can be recognized using Anti-Tag(CGY)FP antibody (Cat.# AB121-AB122) available from Evrogen.

Visualization before photoswitching

Before activation, PS-CFP2 produces cyan fluorescence with excitation and emission maxima at 400 and 468 nm, respectively. Standard levels of excitation do not cause significant photoswitching of cyan or photobleaching of green fluorescence.

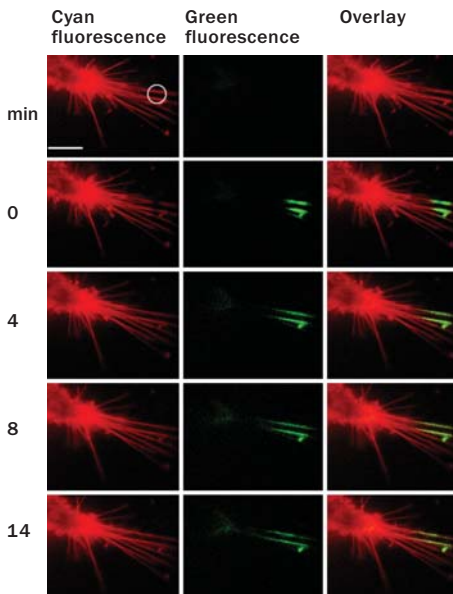
PS-CFP2 excitation spectrum is absolutely different from that of common cyan fluorescent proteins, such as ECFP or Cerulean. Because of the shorter excitation wavelength, cyan fluorescence of PS-CFP2 can be easily separated from green fluorescence of its photoactivated state as well as from any green fluorescent protein. Therefore, common CFP filter sets are not optimal for PS-CFP2 visualization and photoactivation.

Recommended filter sets are XF119-2*, XF131, XF06, XF03, XF11, XF129-2, XF05-2 (Omega Optical); DAPI-5060B* and DAPI-1160A (Semrock); 31037, 31041, 31016, 31021, 31000v2, 1009v2, 31013v2, 11005v2, 31047 (Chroma).

* - preferred filter sets.

Photoswitching

PS-CFP2 undergoes irreversible photoconversion (in response to intense 400 nm light irradiation) expressed in a decrease in cyan fluorescence and appearance of a 490 nm excitation peak with emission maximum at 511 nm.



Tracking of PS-CFP-hDAT fusion within filopodia of HEK293 cells.

Signals in cyan and FITC channels are shown in red and green pseudocolors, respectively. Circle outlines the photoswitched region. Scale bar, 10 μ m. Time after the photoactivation (min) is indicated on left. PS-CFP-tagged hDAT was expressed in HEK293 cells. The fusion protein was localized in the cellular membranes including filopodia. Applying 404 nm laser irradiation for a few seconds PS-CFP-hDAT was selectively photoswitched in the middle parts of two filopodia. High contrast of photoconversion allowed to monitor hDAT movement precisely within thin filopodia in the vicinity of a big PS-CFP-hDAT pool at the filopodia base. At the same time, a decrease in the cyan fluorescence during photoswitching allowed to monitor non-switched PS-CFP-hDAT molecules entering the activated region.

Visualization after photoswitching

For visualization of green fluorescence of photoactivated PS-CFP2, filter sets used for routine GFPs visualization are recommended with excitation about 470-500 nm and emission collected at about 500-550 nm (e.g. Omega Optical XF100-2). Importantly, excitation wavelength must not be below 450 nm to avoid cross-excitation of non-photoactivated PS-CFP2.

Note: To avoid undesirable photoactivation of PS-CFP2 and photobleaching of its photoactivated form it is recommended that excitation light intensities and exposition times be minimized during visualization of both protein forms.

PS-CFP2 visualization, photoactivation and tracking in a confocal microscope

The following parameters are recommended for Leica microscope DMIRE2, confocal TCS-SP2, equipped with 25 mW 405 nm diode laser, 125 mW Ar laser, objective HCX-PL-APO-63x/1.40-0.60/OIL (parameters may vary for different experimental systems):

For visualization of PS-CFP2, we recommend using of 405 nm laser excitation. In a scanning mode, 1-5% power of 405 nm laser causes only negligible PS-CFP2 photoactivation, and can thus be used for preliminary visualization. Fluorescence emission of nonphotoactivated PS-CFP2 can be collected from about 420 nm to about 510-530 nm to gain maximum signal.

For the fast PS-CFP2 photoactivation (which is required to track dynamics of rapidly moving protein of interest), we recommend using 50-100% power of 405 nm laser, 50-2000 ms irradiation in a point, using "point-bleach" mode in Leica confocal software. From our experience, "point-bleach" mode allows much faster photoactivation than any scanning modes, probably because of the continuity of irradiation. Tracking of a

protein characterized by slow dynamics does not require fast photoactivation. In this case, high-power scanning of the ROI works perfectly well for PS-CFP2 photoactivation.

For photoactivated PS-CFP2, you can use 488 nm laser excitation and collect fluorescence emission between 500 nm to 550 nm. To avoid crosstalk, we recommend the use of sequential mode if you need to visualize both initial and photoactivated PS-CFP2. Use low intensity excitation light to avoid photobleaching.

References

- Chudakov *et al.* (2004) *Nat Biotechnol.* 22(11):1435-1439.
Chudakov *et al.* (2007) *Nat. Protocols* 8: 2024-2032.
Gurskaya *et al.* (2003) *Biochem J.* 373(Pt 2):403-408.
Patterson and Lippincott-Schwartz (2002) *Science* 297 (5588): 1873-1877.
Souslova and Chudakov (2006) *Microsc Res Tech.* 69(3): 207-209.
Zhang *et al.* (2007) *BioTechniques* 42:446-450.

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