



TECHNICAL MANUAL

ICOS Bioassay, Propagation Model

Instructions for Use of Product
JA3072

ICOS Bioassay, Propagation Model

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 E-mail Promega Technical Services if you have questions on use of this system: techserv@promega.com

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1. Description

The human immune system is regulated by a complex network of inhibitory and stimulatory receptors that facilitate the elimination of pathogens, while maintaining tolerance to self-antigens. T cells play a central role in cell-mediated immunity against pathogens; however, T cells also contribute to the pathogenesis and exacerbation of autoimmune disorders. Costimulatory T cell receptors have been identified, which upon activation, can enhance T cell-mediated immune responses. Activating these receptors with agonist monoclonal antibodies has emerged as a strategy to enhance T cell responses in cancer or during persistent infections.

Optimal activation of T cells is initiated by engagement of the T cell antigen receptor (TCR)/CD3 complex and activation of a costimulatory receptor such as Inducible T Cell Co-Stimulator (ICOS, CD278; 1–3). ICOS binds to its ligand ICOSL (B7RP-1, CD275), which is constitutively expressed on B cells, monocytes, and dendritic cells, and can be induced on endothelial and epithelial cells during inflammation (4–7). ICOS costimulation induces the production of effector T cell cytokines such as interferon (IFN)- γ , interleukin-4 (IL-4) and IL-10 (1–3).

Current methods rely on primary human T cells and antigen presenting cells (APCs), and measurement of functional endpoints such as cell proliferation, cell surface marker expression and cytokine production. These assays are laborious and highly variable due to their reliance on donor cells, complex assay protocols and unqualified assay reagents. As a result, these assays are difficult to establish in a quality-controlled setting.

The ICOS Bioassay, Propagation Model^(a-f) (Cat.# JA3072), is a bioluminescent reporter cell-based assay that overcomes the limitations of existing assays. The bioassay is easy-to-use, quantitative and demonstrates the functional response of biologics that activate ICOS. It can be used to measure the potency and stability of antibodies and other biologics that activate ICOS (8). The assay consists of two genetically engineered cell lines:

- **ICOS Effector Cells:** Jurkat T cells expressing ICOS and endogenous TCR/CD3 and a NanoLuc[®] (NL) luciferase reporter driven by ICOS and TCR/CD3 pathway-dependent response elements.
- **Fc γ RIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells^(b):** CHO-K1 cells engineered to express a proprietary TCR-activating protein as well as human Fc γ RIIb. Fc γ RIIb serves as a crosslinking receptor which binds to antibody Fc domains and clusters agonist antibodies for maximal agonist activity.

The ICOS Effector Cells and Fc γ RIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells are provided in Cell Propagation Model (CPM) format, which includes cryopreserved cells that can be thawed, propagated and banked for long-term use.

When screening for agonist antibodies of ICOS, we recommend performing the assay with the provided Fc γ RIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells in parallel with aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells to determine the role of Fc γ RIIb-mediated crosslinking in enhancing the effect of agonist antibodies. These aAPC/CHO-K1 cells that do not express Fc γ RIIb are sold separately (Cat.# J3312). Induction of the ICOS Effector Cells with an ICOS agonist antibody results in increased promoter-mediated luminescence (Figure 1). The bioluminescent signal is quantified using the Bio-Glo-NL[™] Luciferase Assay System, and a standard luminometer such as the GloMax[®] Discover System (see Related Products, Section 9.C).

The ICOS Bioassay reflects the mechanism of action (MOA) of biologics designed to activate ICOS. Specifically, ICOS activation-mediated luminescence is increased after adding an ICOS activating antibody, but not after adding anti-OX40 or anti-4-1BB agonist antibodies (Figure 2). The bioassay is prequalified following International Council for Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH) guidelines and shows the precision, accuracy and linearity required for routine use in potency and stability studies (Table 1 and Figure 3). The bioassay can be performed in a two-day timeframe, and the workflow is simple, robust and compatible with both 96-well and 384-well plate formats used for antibody screening in early drug discovery (Figure 4). In addition, the bioassay can be performed in the presence of human serum (in antibody samples), indicating potential for further development into a neutralizing antibody bioassay (Figure 5).

It is increasingly common during drug development to analyze potential therapeutic antibodies for Antibody-Dependent Cell-Mediated Cytotoxicity (ADCC) activity. Another application of the ICOS Bioassay is the ability to measure ADCC activity of anti-ICOS antibodies by combining ADCC Reporter Bioassay Effector Cells, available separately (Cat. #G7010), with ICOS Effector Cells, used as target cells in this application (Figure 6).

In addition to the ICOS Bioassay, we offer a Control Ab, Anti-ICOS (Cat. # K1241), for use as a positive control for assay optimization and routine quality control.

Blockade of ICOS is a separate immunotherapy strategy to reduce autoimmunity and alloimmunity. The ICOS Bioassay is not designed to detect blocking activity of ICOS antibodies. We offer separately the cell propagation model ICOS Blockade Bioassay, Propagation Model (Cat. # JA6072), and thaw-and-use ICOS Blockade Bioassay (Cat. # JA6001, JA6005) for screening and potency testing of ICOS antagonists.

1. Description (continued)

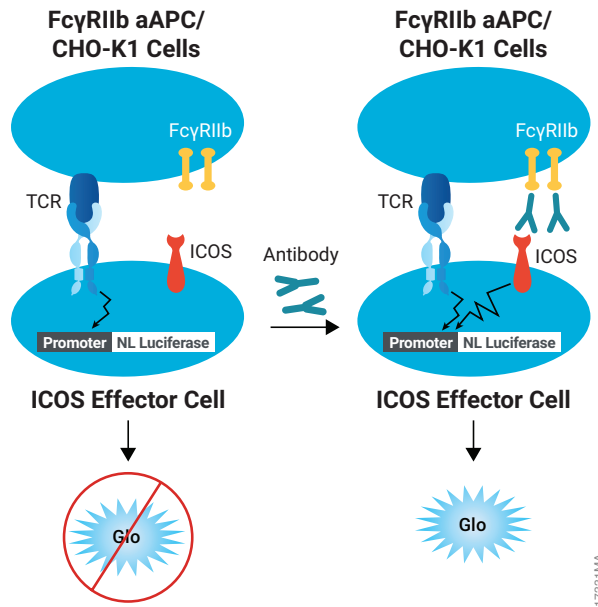
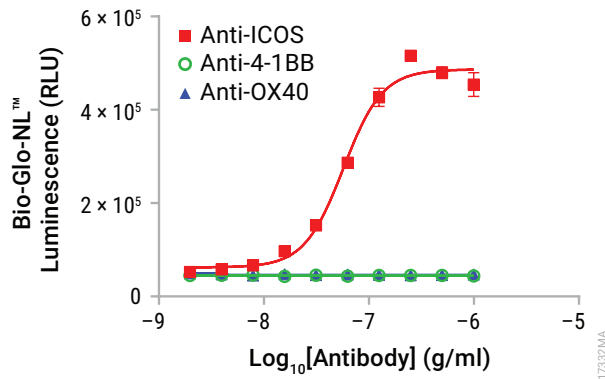


Figure 1. Representation of the ICOS Bioassay. The ICOS Bioassay for FcγRIIb-dependent agonist antibodies consists of two cell lines, ICOS Effector Cells and FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells. In the absence of agonist antibody, ICOS is not activated and the luminescence signal is low. In the presence of FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells, anti-ICOS antibody can be crosslinked, thereby inducing ICOS pathway-activating luminescence in a dose-dependent manner.



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Figure 2. The ICOS Bioassay reflects the mechanism of action (MOA) and shows specificity for antibodies designed to activate ICOS. ICOS Effector Cells were incubated with FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells in the presence of serial titrations of agonist antibodies as indicated. After a 6-hour induction, Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent was added and luminescence quantified using the GloMax® Discover System. Data were fitted to a four-parameter logistic curve using GraphPad Prism® software. Data were generated using thaw-and-use cells.

Table 1. The ICOS Bioassay Shows Precision, Accuracy and Linearity.

Parameter	Results	
Accuracy	% Expected Relative Potency	% Recovery
	50	46.6
	70	69.0
	100	102.8
	140	143.1
	200	211.7
Repeatability (% CV)	100% (Reference)	2.7
Intermediate Precision (% CV)		5.8
Linearity (r ²)		0.9996
Linearity (y = mx + b)		y = 1.094x - 7.835

A 50–200% theoretical potency series of Control Ab, Anti-ICOS, was analyzed in triplicate in three independent experiments performed on three days by two analysts using the ICOS Bioassay for FcγRIIb-dependent antibodies. Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent was added and luminescence was quantified using the GloMax® Discover System. Data were analyzed and relative potencies were calculated after parallelism determination using JMP® software. Data were generated using thaw-and-use cells.

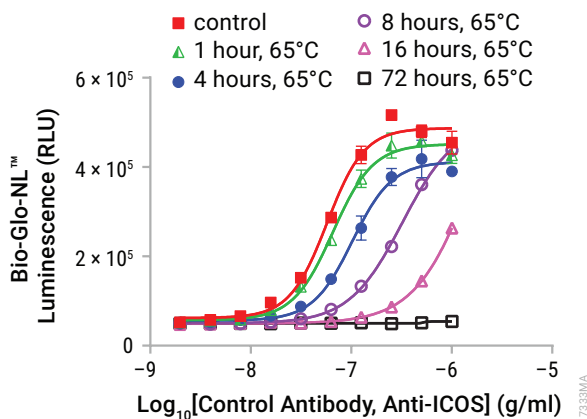


Figure 3. The ICOS Bioassay is stability-indicating. Samples of Control Ab, Anti-ICOS, were maintained at 4°C (control) or heat-treated at the indicated times and temperatures, then analyzed using the ICOS Bioassay for FcγRIIb-dependent antibodies. Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent was added and luminescence quantified using the GloMax® Discover System. Data were fitted to a four-parameter logistic curve using GraphPad Prism® software. Data were generated using thaw-and-use cells.

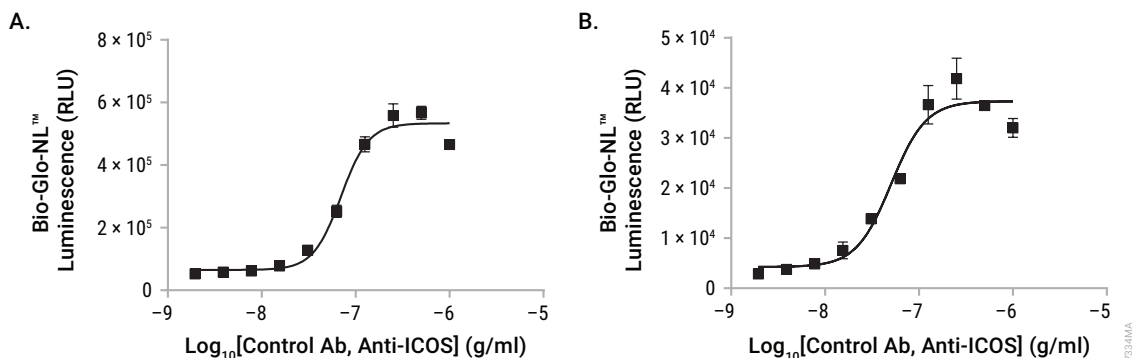


Figure 4. The ICOS Bioassay is amenable to 384-well plate format. Panel A. The ICOS Bioassay for FcγRIIb-dependent antibodies was performed in 96-well plates as described in this technical manual with a titration of Control Ab, Anti-ICOS. **Panel B.** The ICOS Bioassay for FcγRIIb-dependent antibodies was performed in 384-well format as briefly described here. FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 cells were harvested and 8×10^3 cells/15μl/well plated 16–24 hours prior to assay, in a 384-well white assay plate (e.g., Corning® Cat.# 3570). On the day of the assay, 5μl of 5X serially diluted Control Ab, Anti-ICOS, was added, followed by the addition of 2×10^4 /5μl/well of ICOS Effector Cells. After 6-hour assay incubation at 37°C, 5% CO₂, 25μl of Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent was added per well and luminescence was quantified using the GloMax® Discover System. Data were fitted to four-parameter logistic curves using GraphPad Prism® software. The EC₅₀ values were 7.0 and 5.1ng/ml for the 96-well and 384-well format, respectively, and the fold induction was 10.2 and 13.1 for 96-well and 384-well format, respectively. Data were generated using thaw-and-use cells.

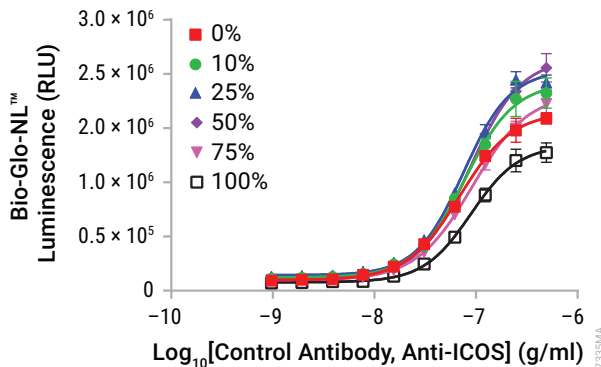


Figure 5. The ICOS Bioassay is tolerant to human serum. Following the ICOS Bioassay protocol for Fc γ RIIb-dependent antibodies, Control Ab, Anti-ICOS (Cat.# K1241) was analyzed in the absence or presence of pooled normal human serum (0–100% in the antibody sample). After the 6-hour assay induction at 37°C, Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent was added and luminescence quantified using the GloMax® Discover System. Data were fitted to a four-parameter logistic curve using GraphPad Prism® software. Data were generated using thaw-and-use cells. The ICOS Bioassay is tolerant to human serum with this serum pool. A different human serum pool showed similar effects on the assay (data not shown).

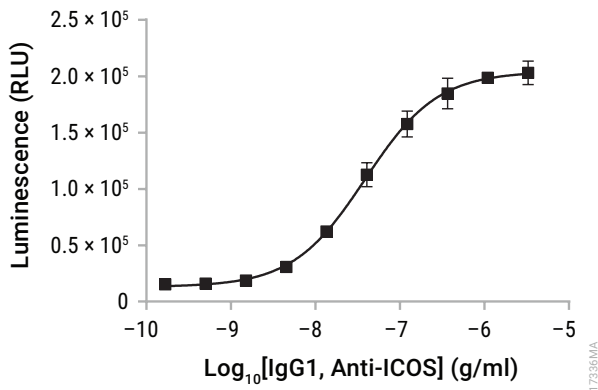


Figure 6. The ICOS Bioassay can be used to measure ADCC activity. A 2:1 ratio of ICOS Effector Cells (used as target cells in this application) and ADCC Effector Jurkat cells (Cat.# G7010) were incubated for 6 hours in the presence of a research-grade anti-ICOS antibody (human IgG1 isotype). For reference, we use 3.3×10^{-6} g/ml as a starting concentration (1X) and a threefold serial dilution when testing huIgG1 anti-ICOS. Bio-Glo™ Reagent was added and luminescence quantified using the GloMax® Discover System. Data were fitted to a four-parameter logistic curve using GraphPad Prism® software. Data were generated using thaw-and-use cells.

2. Product Components and Storage Conditions

PRODUCT	SIZE	CAT.#
ICOS Bioassay, Propagation Model	1 each	JA3072

Not for Medical Diagnostic Use. Includes:

- 2 vials ICOS Effector Cells (CPM), 3.3×10^7 cells/ml (1.0ml per vial)
- 2 vials FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells (CPM), 1.2×10^7 cells/ml (1.0ml per vial)

Note: Thaw and propagate one vial to create frozen cell banks before use in an assay. The second vial should be reserved for future use.

Storage Conditions: Upon arrival, immediately transfer the cell vials to below -140°C (freezer or liquid nitrogen vapor phase) for long-term storage. Do not store cell vials submerged in liquid nitrogen. **Do not** store cell vials at -80°C because this will decrease cell viability and cell performance.

ICOS Effector Cells can also be paired with aAPC/CHO-K1 cells for Fcγ-independent antibodies. aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells, Propagation Model, are available as a standalone product:

Available Separately

PRODUCT	SIZE	CAT.#
aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells, Propagation Model	1 each	J3312

Not for Medical Diagnostic Use.

3. Before You Begin

Please read through the entire protocol to become familiar with the components and the assay procedure before beginning.

Remove the product label from the box containing vials with cells or note the catalog number and lot number from the label. This information can be used to download documents for the specified product from the website, such as Certificate of Analysis.

 **Note:** The ICOS Bioassay, Propagation Model, uses the Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay System (Cat.# J3081, J3082, J3083) for detection. **Do not** use the Bio-Glo™ Luciferase Assay System (Cat.# G7940, G7941).

The ICOS Bioassay, Propagation Model, is intended to be used with user-provided antibodies or other biologics designed to activate ICOS. Control Ab, Anti-ICOS (Cat.# K1241), and aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells (Cat.# J3312) are available separately for use in assay optimization and routine quality control. We strongly recommend including Control Ab, Anti-ICOS, along with the required FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells as a positive control in the first few assays to gain familiarity with the assay. Data generated using Control Ab, Anti-ICOS, are shown in Section 9.A, Representative Assay Results.

Cell thawing, propagation and banking should be performed exactly as described in Sections 4 and 5. Cell seeding and propagation densities have been optimized to ensure stable cell growth, which is reflected in a steady cell doubling rate, to achieve optimal, consistent performance. An accurate, reliable and reproducible cell counting method is required for routine cell culturing and optimal bioassay performance.

The recommended cell plating densities, induction time and assay buffer components described in Section 6 were established using Control Ab, Anti-ICOS, with FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells for FcγRIIb-dependent antibodies or aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells for FcγRIIb-independent antibodies. You may need to adjust the parameters provided here and optimize assay conditions for your own antibody or biologic samples.

The ICOS Bioassay produces a bioluminescent signal and requires a sensitive luminescence plate reader. Bioassay development and performance data included in this Technical Manual were generated using the GloMax® Discover System (see Section 9.C, Related Products). An integration time of 0.5 second/well was used for all readings. The bioassay is compatible with most other plate-reading luminometers, though relative luminescence unit (RLU) readings will vary with the sensitivity and settings of each instrument. If using a reader with adjustable gain, we recommend a high-gain setting. The use of different instruments and gain adjustment will affect the magnitude of the raw data but should not affect the measured relative potency of test samples.

3.A. Materials to Be Supplied by the User

(Composition of Buffers and Solutions is provided in Section 9.B.)


Reagents

- user-defined anti-ICOS antibodies or other biologics samples
- RPMI 1640 Medium with L-glutamine and HEPES (e.g., Corning® Cat.# 10-041-CV or GIBCO™ Cat.# 22400105)
- Ham's F-12 Medium with L-glutamine (e.g., GIBCO™ Cat.# 11765062)
- fetal bovine serum (e.g., VWR Cat.# 89510-194, GIBCO™ Cat.# 35-015-CV or HyClone Cat.# SH30071.03)
- hygromycin B (e.g., GIBCO™ Cat.# 10687010)
- G418 Geneticin (e.g., GIBCO™ Cat.# 10131035)
- blasticidin S HCl (e.g., GIBCO™ Cat.# A11139)
- sodium pyruvate (e.g., GIBCO™ Cat.# 11360070)
- MEM nonessential amino acids, 100X (e.g., GIBCO™ Cat.# 11140050)
- DMSO (e.g., Sigma Cat.# D2650)
- Accutase® solution (e.g., Sigma Cat.# A6964)
- DPBS (e.g., GIBCO™ Cat.# 14190144)
- Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay System (Cat.# J3081, J3082, J3083)
- Trypan blue solution (e.g., Sigma Cat.# T8154)
- **optional:** Control Ab, Anti-ICOS (Cat.# K1241; This antibody is FcγRIIb-dependent and requires the use of FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells for optimal signal.)
- **optional:** aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells (Cat.# J3312; if using FcγRIIb-independent antibodies)

Supplies and Equipment

- solid-white, flat-bottom 96-well assay plates (e.g., Corning® Cat.# 3917) or 384-well assay plates (e.g., Corning® Cat.# 3570) for plating and reading luminescence
- sterile clear V-bottom 96-well plate with lid (e.g., Costar® Cat.# 3896) for preparing antibody dilutions
- pipettes (single-channel and 12-channel; for best results use both manual and electronic pipettes as needed)
- sterile 15ml and 50ml conical tubes
- sterile reagent reservoirs (e.g., Corning®/Costar® Cat.# 4870)
- 37°C, 5% CO₂ incubator
- 37°C water bath
- sensitive plate reader with glow luminescence measuring capability or luminometer (e.g., GloMax® Discover System or equivalent system)

4. Preparing ICOS Effector Cells

 Follow institutional guidelines for handling, including use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and waste disposal for biohazardous material.

4.A. Cell Thawing and Initial Cell Culture

1. Prepare 40ml of initial cell culture medium by adding 4ml of FBS to 36ml of RPMI 1640 medium prewarmed to 37°C. This initial cell culture medium will be used for culturing the cells immediately after thawing.
2. Transfer 9ml of prewarmed initial cell culture medium to a 50ml conical tube.
3. Remove one vial of ICOS Effector Cells from storage at -140°C and thaw in a 37°C water bath with gentle agitation (no inversion) until just thawed (typically 2–3 minutes).
4. Transfer all of the cells (approximately 1ml) to the 50ml conical tube containing 9ml of prewarmed initial cell culture medium.
5. Centrifuge at $90 \times g$ for 10 minutes.
6. Carefully aspirate the medium and resuspend the cell pellet in 25ml of prewarmed initial cell culture medium.
7. Transfer the cell suspension to a T75 tissue culture flask and place the flask horizontally in a humidified 37°C, 5% CO_2 incubator.
8. Incubate for approximately 48 hours before passaging the cells.

4.B. Cell Maintenance and Propagation

For cell maintenance and propagation starting from the second cell passage, use the cell growth medium containing antibiotics and monitor cell viability and doubling rate during propagation. The cell growth rate will stabilize by 7–10 days after thawing, at which time cell viability is typically >90%, and the average cell doubling rate is 22–26 hours. Passage number should be recorded for each passage. In our experience, cells maintain their functionality for up to 25 passages, or 46 cell doublings, if passaging is performed on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule.

1. On the day of cell passage, measure cell viability and density by Trypan blue staining.
2. Seed the cells at a density of 5.0×10^5 cells/ml if passaging every two days (e.g., Monday-Wednesday or Wednesday-Friday) or 3.0×10^5 cells/ml if passaging every three days (e.g., Friday-Monday). Always maintain the flasks in a horizontal position in the incubator. Do not allow the cells to grow to a density greater than 2×10^6 cells/ml.
3. Maintain the cell culture by adding fresh cell growth medium to the cell suspension in the original flask or by transferring the cells to a new flask while maintaining a consistent ratio of culture volume to flask surface area (e.g., 25ml volume per T75 flask or 50ml volume per T150 flask).
4. Place the flasks horizontally in a humidified, 37°C, 5% CO_2 incubator.

4.C. Cell Freezing and Banking

1. On the day of cell freezing, prepare fresh cell freezing medium and keep on ice.
2. Gently mix the cells with a pipette to create a homogenous cell suspension.
3. Remove a sample for cell counting by Trypan blue staining. Calculate the volume of cell freezing medium needed based on desired cell freezing densities of 1×10^7 – 3×10^7 cells/ml.
4. Transfer the cell suspension to 50ml sterile conical tubes or larger sized centrifuge tubes, and centrifuge at $130 \times g$, 4°C , for 10–15 minutes.
5. Gently aspirate the medium, taking care not to disturb the cell pellet.
6. Carefully resuspend the cell pellet in ice-cold cell freezing medium to a final cell density of 1×10^7 – 3×10^7 cells/ml. Combine the cell suspensions into a single tube and dispense into cryovials.
7. Freeze the cells using a controlled-rate freezer (preferred), or a Mr. Frosty[®] or a Styrofoam[®] rack in a -80°C freezer overnight. Transfer the vials to -140°C or below for long-term storage.

5. Preparing FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells

 **Note:** The conditions listed below, for preparing FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells, are also recommended for preparing the aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells (Cat.# J3312).

5.A. Cell Thawing and Initial Cell Culture

1. Prepare 50ml of initial cell culture medium by adding 5ml of FBS to 45ml of Ham's F12 medium prewarmed to 37°C . This initial cell culture medium will be used for culturing the cells immediately after thawing.
2. Transfer 9ml of prewarmed initial cell culture medium to a 50ml conical tube.
3. Remove one vial of FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells from storage at -140°C and thaw in a 37°C water bath with gentle agitation (no inversion) until just thawed (typically 2–3 minutes).
4. Transfer all the cells (approximately 1ml) to the 50ml conical tube containing 9ml of prewarmed initial cell culture medium.
5. Centrifuge at $90 \times g$ for 10 minutes.
6. Carefully aspirate the medium and resuspend the cell pellet in 20ml of prewarmed initial cell culture medium.
7. Transfer the cell suspension to a T75 tissue culture flask and place the flask horizontally in a 37°C , 5% CO_2 incubator.
8. Incubate for approximately 24 hours before passaging the cells.

5.B. Cell Maintenance and Propagation

Note: For cell maintenance and propagation starting from the second cell passage, use the cell growth medium containing antibiotics and monitor cell viability and doubling rate during propagation. The cell growth rate will stabilize by 7–10 days post-thaw, at which time cell viability is typically >95%, and the average cell doubling rate is ~24 hours. Passage number should be recorded for each passage. In our experience, cells maintain their functionality for up to 25 passages if passaging is performed on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule.

1. On the day of cell passage, aspirate the cell culture medium and wash the cells with DPBS.
2. Add 2ml of Accutase® solution to each T75 flask and place in a 37°C, 5% CO₂ incubator for 5–7 minutes or until the cells round up and detach from the bottom of the flask.
3. Add 8ml of cell growth medium to each T75 flask. Transfer the cell suspension to a sterile 15ml or 50ml conical tube.
4. Count the cells by Trypan blue staining. We suggest seeding the cells at a density of 4×10^4 cells/cm² if passaging every two days (e.g., Monday-Wednesday or Wednesday-Friday) or 2×10^4 cells/cm² if passaging every three days (e.g., Friday-Monday)
5. Add an appropriate amount of cell growth media to a new flask.
6. Transfer the appropriate volume of cell suspension to achieve the desired cell seeding density per area.
7. Place the flasks horizontally in a humidified 37°C, 5% CO₂ incubator.

5.C. Cell Freezing and Banking

1. On the day of cell freezing, make fresh cell freezing medium and keep on ice.
2. Aspirate the cell culture medium and wash the cells with DPBS.
3. Add 2ml of Accutase® solution to each T75 flask and place in a 37°C, 5% CO₂ incubator for 5–7 minutes or until the cells round up and detach from the bottom of the flask.
4. Add 8ml of cell growth medium to each T75 flask. Transfer the cell suspension to a sterile 15ml or 50ml conical tube.
5. Remove a sample for cell counting by Trypan blue staining. Calculate the volume of cell freezing medium needed based on desired cell freezing densities of 3×10^6 – 1.2×10^7 cells/ml.
6. Transfer the cell suspension to 50ml sterile conical tubes or larger-sized centrifuge tubes, and centrifuge for 10 minutes at $180 \times g$, 4°C.
7. Carefully aspirate the supernatant and avoid disturbing the cell pellet.
8. Gently resuspend the cell pellet in ice-cold cell freezing medium to a final cell density of 3×10^6 – 1.2×10^7 cells/ml. Combine the cell suspensions into a single tube and dispense into cryovials.
9. Freeze the cells using a controlled-rate freezer (preferred), or a Mr. Frosty® or a Styrofoam® rack in a –80°C freezer overnight. Transfer the vials to at or below –140°C for long-term storage.

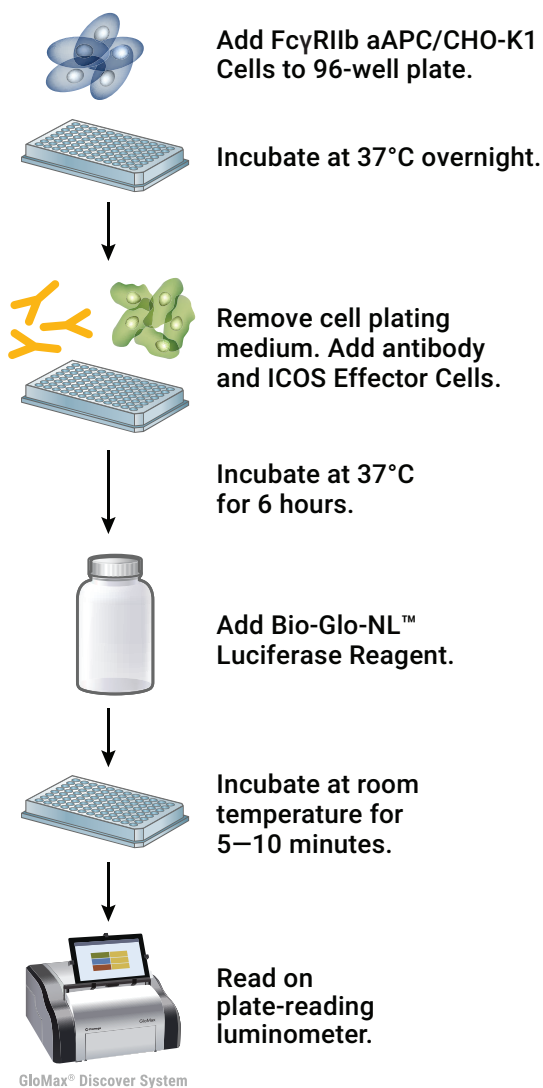


Figure 7. Schematic protocol for the ICOS Bioassay, Propagation Model.

6. Assay Protocol for Fc γ RIIb-Dependent Antibodies

This assay protocol requires two engineered cell lines: ICOS Effector Cells and Fc γ RIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells for Fc γ RIIb-dependent antibodies or aAPC CHO-K1 Cells (Cat. # J3312) available separately, for Fc γ RIIb-independent antibodies. The Fc γ RIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells are also available in thaw-and-use format (see *ICOS Bioassay Technical Manual*, #TM631; Cat.# J3261). Either CPM or thaw-and-use format can be used in this assay.

The procedure below illustrates the use of the ICOS Bioassay to test two Fc γ RIIb-dependent antibody samples against a reference sample in a single assay run using the Fc γ RIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells, Propagation Model format (Figure 7). Each test and reference antibody is run in triplicate, in a 10-point dilution series, in a single 96-well assay plate using the inner 60 wells. Other experimental and plate layouts are possible but may require further optimization.

Note: When preparing test and reference antibodies, choose an appropriate starting concentration and dilution scheme to achieve a complete dose-response curve with proper upper and lower asymptotes and sufficient points on the slope. For reference, we use 1 μ g/ml as a starting concentration (1X) and twofold serial dilution when testing Control Ab, Anti-ICOS (Cat.# K1241) with either Fc γ RIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells or aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells.

6.A. Preparing Cell Plating Medium, Assay Buffer, Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent and Antibody Samples

1. **Fc γ RIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells Plating Medium:** On the day before the assay, prepare an appropriate amount of cell plating medium (90% Ham's F-12/10% FBS). Thaw the FBS overnight at 4°C or in a 37°C water bath on the day of use. Mix well and warm to 37°C before use. For reference, 40ml of cell plating medium is typically sufficient for 120 wells in a 96-well assay format using the inner 60 wells.
2. **Assay Buffer:** On the day of the assay, prepare an appropriate amount of assay buffer (99% RPMI 1640/1% FBS). Mix well and warm to 37°C before use. For reference, 30ml of assay buffer is typically sufficient for 120 wells in a 96-well assay format using the inner 60 wells.

Note: The recommended assay buffer contains 1% FBS. This concentration of FBS works well for the Control Ab, Anti-ICOS that we tested. If you experience assay performance issues when using this assay buffer, we recommend testing different serum concentrations in the range of 0.5–10%.

3. **Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Reagent:** For reference, 10ml of Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent is sufficient to assay 120 wells in a 96-well assay format. The Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay Substrate should always be stored at –20°C. Thaw the Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay Buffer at room temperature (do not exceed 25°C) during the 6-hour induction period of the assay. We recommend preparing the reconstituted Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay Reagent immediately before use. For instructions on use of the Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay System, please refer to the *Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay System Quick Protocol*, #FB227.

 **Note:** The ICOS Blockade Bioassay is compatible only with Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay Reagent. **Do not use** the Bio-Glo™ Luciferase Assay Reagent with the ICOS Blockade Bioassay.

4. **Test and Reference Samples:** Using assay buffer as the diluent, prepare stock starting dilutions (dilu1, 2X final concentration) of two test antibodies (300µl each) and one reference antibody (600µl) in 1.5ml tubes. Store the tubes containing antibody starting dilutions appropriately before making antibody serial dilutions.

Notes:

- If you are using Control Ab, Anti-ICOS (Cat.# K1241), as a reference antibody in your assay, prepare a 50µg/ml working stock of Control Ab, Anti-ICOS by adding 2µl of Control Ab, Anti-ICOS stock (1.0mg/ml) to 38µl of assay buffer. Prepare a 600µl starting dilution of 2µg/ml of Control Ab, Anti-ICOS (dilu1, 2X final concentration) by adding 24µl of Control Ab, Anti-ICOS working stock to 576µl of assay buffer.
- To streamline assay setup, prepare antibody serial dilutions prior to harvesting and plating ICOS Effector Cells.
- For reference, we use 1µg/ml as a starting concentration (1X) and twofold serial dilution when testing Control Ab, Anti-ICOS (Cat.# K1241), with either FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells or aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells.

6.B. Plate Layout Design

For the protocol described here, use the plate layout illustrated in Figure 8 as a guide. The protocol describes serial replicate dilutions (n = 3) of test and reference antibody to generate two 10-point dose-response curves for each plate.

Recommended Plate Layout Design													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	Assay Buffer (B)
B	B	no Ab	dilu9	dilu8	dilu7	dilu6	dilu5	dilu4	dilu3	dilu2	dilu1	B	Reference Ab
C	B	no Ab	dilu9	dilu8	dilu7	dilu6	dilu5	dilu4	dilu3	dilu2	dilu1	B	Test Ab
D	B	no Ab	dilu9	dilu8	dilu7	dilu6	dilu5	dilu4	dilu3	dilu2	dilu1	B	Reference Ab
E	B	no Ab	dilu9	dilu8	dilu7	dilu6	dilu5	dilu4	dilu3	dilu2	dilu1	B	Test Ab
F	B	no Ab	dilu9	dilu8	dilu7	dilu6	dilu5	dilu4	dilu3	dilu2	dilu1	B	Reference Ab
G	B	no Ab	dilu9	dilu8	dilu7	dilu6	dilu5	dilu4	dilu3	dilu2	dilu1	B	Test Ab
H	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	Assay Buffer (B)

Figure 8. Example plate layout showing nonclustered sample locations of test antibody and reference antibody dilution series, and wells containing assay buffer (denoted by “B”) alone.

6.C. Preparing and Plating FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells

While maintaining the FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells, follow the recommended cell seeding density (refer to Section 5 for culture instructions for FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells, Propagation Model). Changes in cell culture volume or seeding density will affect cell growth rate and assay performance. Do not allow the cells to grow to 100% confluence. Only use the cells in the assay after the cell doubling rate has stabilized during propagation.

Note: Perform the following steps in a sterile cell culture hood.

1. We recommend passaging the FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells two days before plating for the assay (as described in Section 5) to ensure optimal and consistent assay performance.
2. On the day before performing the assay, prepare FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 cell plating medium (90% Ham's F-12/10% FBS).
3. Aspirate the cell culture medium from the FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells and wash with DPBS.
4. Add 2ml of Accutase® solution to each T75 flask, and place the flask in a 37°C, 5% CO₂ incubator for 5–7 minutes or until the cells round up and detach from the bottom of the flask.
5. Add 8ml of FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 cell plating medium to the flask. Transfer the cell suspension to a 50ml (or larger) conical centrifuge tube.
6. Gently mix and count the FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells by Trypan blue staining.
7. Centrifuge at 230 × *g* for 10 minutes.
8. Gently resuspend the cell pellet in cell plating medium to achieve a concentration of 4 × 10⁵ viable cells/ml.
9. Transfer the suspension to a sterile reagent reservoir. Using a multichannel pipette, immediately dispense 100μl of the cell suspension to each of the inner 60 wells of a 96-well white flat-bottom assay plate. The final cell number in each well should be 4 × 10⁴ cells/well.
10. Add 100μl of cell plating medium to each of the outside wells of the assay plates.
11. Place lids on the assay plates and incubate in a 37°C, 5% CO₂ incubator overnight (18–24 hours).

6.D. Preparing Antibody Serial Dilutions

The instructions described here are for preparation of a single stock of twofold serial dilutions of a single antibody for analysis in triplicate (150µl of each dilution provides a sufficient volume for analysis in triplicate). Alternatively, you can prepare three independent stocks of serial dilutions to generate triplicate samples. To prepare twofold serial dilutions, you will need 600µl of reference antibody at 2X the highest antibody concentration in your dose-response curve. You will need 300µl of each test antibody at 2X the highest antibody concentration in each of the test antibody dose-response curves. For other dilution schemes, adjust the volumes accordingly.

Note: If you are using Control Ab, Anti-ICOS (Cat.# K1241), as a control in the assay, follow the instructions below to prepare twofold serial dilutions. A twofold serial dilution for test antibodies is listed as an example below as well.

1. On the day of the assay, prepare an appropriate amount of assay buffer as described in Section 6.A.
2. To a sterile clear V-bottom 96-well plate, add 300µl of reference antibody starting dilution (dilu1, 2X final concentration) to wells A11 and B11 (see Figure 9).
3. Add 300µl of test antibodies 1 and 2 starting dilution (dilu1, 2X final concentration) to wells E11 and G11, respectively (see Figure 8).
4. Add 150µl of assay buffer to other wells in these four rows, from column 10 to column 2.
5. Transfer 150µl of the antibody starting dilutions from column 11 into column 10. Mix well by pipetting. Avoid creating bubbles.
6. Repeat equivalent twofold serial dilutions across the columns from right to left through column 3. Do not dilute into column 2.

Note: Wells A2, B2, E2 and G2 contain 150µl of assay buffer without antibody as a negative control.

7. Cover the antibody dilution plate with a lid and keep at ambient temperature (22–25°C) while preparing the ICOS Effector Cells.

6.D. Preparing Antibody Serial Dilutions (continued)

Recommended Plate Layout for Antibody Dilutions Prepared from a Single Antibody Stock													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
A		no Ab	dilu9	dilu8	dilu7	dilu6	dilu5	dilu4	dilu3	dilu2	dilu1		Reference Ab
B		no Ab	dilu9	dilu8	dilu7	dilu6	dilu5	dilu4	dilu3	dilu2	dilu1		Reference Ab
C													
D													
E		no Ab	dilu9	dilu8	dilu7	dilu6	dilu5	dilu4	dilu3	dilu2	dilu1		Test Ab 1
F													
G		no Ab	dilu9	dilu8	dilu7	dilu6	dilu5	dilu4	dilu3	dilu2	dilu1		Test Ab 2
H													

Figure 9. Example plate layout showing antibody serial dilutions.

6.E. Preparing ICOS Effector Cells

While maintaining the ICOS Effector Cells, it is important to follow the recommended cell seeding density. Changes in cell culture volume or seeding density will affect cell growth rate and assay performance. Only use the cells in the assay after the cell doubling rate has stabilized during propagation and cell viability is greater than 95%.

1. Passage the cells two days before performing the assay as described in Section 4.B.
2. Count the ICOS Effector Cells by Trypan blue staining and calculate the cell density and viability.
3. Transfer an appropriate amount of ICOS Effector Cells from the culture vessel to a 50ml conical tube or larger sized centrifuge tube.
4. Pellet the cells at $130 \times g$ for 10 minutes at ambient temperature, and resuspend the pellet in assay buffer at 70% of the full volume needed to generate the targeted final cell density of 2.5×10^6 cells/ml.
5. Count the cells again and adjust the volume of assay buffer to achieve a final cell density of 2.5×10^6 cells/ml. You will need at least 6ml of ICOS Effector Cells to fill 120 assay wells, or the inner 60 wells of two assay plates.

6.F. Adding ICOS Effector Cells and Antibody to Assay Plates

1. Take the 96-well assay plates containing FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells out of the incubator. Invert the assay plate above a sink to remove the medium. Then, place the inverted plate on paper towels for 5–10 seconds to drain any remaining medium. Alternatively, remove 95µl of medium from each of the wells using a manual multi-channel pipette.
2. Using a multichannel pipette, add 40µl of the appropriate antibody dilution (Figure 9) to the assay plates according to the plate layout in Figure 8.
3. Mix the ICOS Effector Cells by tube inversion and transfer the suspension to a sterile reagent reservoir. Using a multichannel pipette, immediately dispense 40µl of the cell suspension to each of the inner 60 wells of the assay plates. Gently swirl the assay plates to ensure mixing of the Effector Cells and antibody.
4. Add 80µl of assay buffer to each of the outside wells of the assay plates.
5. Cover the assay plates with lids and incubate in a 37°C, 5% CO₂ incubator for 6 hours.

Note: The 6-hour assay time was optimized using the Control Ab, Anti-ICOS. We recommend optimizing assay time (5–24 hours) with your own antibody or other biologic samples.

6.G. Preparing and Adding Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent

We recommend preparing the Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay Reagent immediately before use. Ensure that the Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay Buffer is equilibrated to room temperature (do not exceed 25°C) before reconstituting the reagent. **Do not** store the reconstituted reagent. Once reconstituted, the reagent will lose 10% activity in approximately 8 hours at room temperature.

 **Note:** The ICOS Bioassay is compatible only with Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay Reagent. **Do not** use Bio-Glo™ Luciferase Assay Reagent with the ICOS Bioassay.

1. Remove the Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay Substrate from –20°C storage and mix by pipetting. Briefly centrifuge the tubes if the substrate has collected in the cap or on the sides of the tubes.
2. Prepare the desired amount of reconstituted Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay Reagent by combining one volume of substrate with 50 volumes of buffer. For example, if the experiment requires 10ml of reagent, add 200µl of substrate to 10ml of buffer. Ten milliliters (10ml) of Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent is sufficient for 120 wells (two assay plates, using the inner 60 wells of each plate).
3. Remove assay plates from the incubator after the incubation period and equilibrate to room temperature for 10–15 minutes.
4. Using a manual multichannel pipette, add 80µl of Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent to the inner 60 wells of the assay plates, taking care not to create bubbles.
5. Add 80µl of Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay Reagent to wells B1, D1 and F1 of each assay plate to measure background signal.

6.G. Preparing and Adding Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent (continued)

- Wait 5–10 minutes, then measure the luminescence in a GloMax® Discover System or a plate reader with glow-type luminescence reading capabilities. The luminescence intensity will decay gradually, with a signal half-life of approximately 120 minutes at room temperature.

Note: Varying the Bio-Glo-NL™ incubation time will affect the raw relative light unit (RLU) values but should not significantly change the EC₅₀ value and maximum fold induction.

6.H. Data Analysis

- Determine the plate background by calculating the average RLU from wells B1, D1 and F1.
- Calculate fold induction =
$$\frac{\text{RLU (induced-background)}}{\text{RLU (no antibody control-background)}}$$
- Graph data as RLU versus Log₁₀ [antibody] and fold induction versus Log₁₀ [antibody]. Fit curves and determine the EC₅₀ value of antibody response using appropriate curve fitting software (such as GraphPad Prism® software).

7. Troubleshooting

For questions not addressed here, please contact your local Promega Branch Office or Distributor. Contact information available at: www.promega.com. Email: techserv@promega.com

Symptoms

Low luminescence measurements (RLU readout)

Causes and Comments

Ensure that you are using Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent, which is designed for NanoLuc® luciferase reporter Bioassays. The ICOS Bioassay is not compatible with Bio-Glo™ Reagent, which is designed for firefly luciferase reporter bioassays.

Choose an instrument designed for plate-reading luminescence detection. Instruments designed primarily for fluorescence detection are not recommended. Luminometers measure and report luminescence as relative values, and actual RLU numbers will vary between instruments.

Some models of luminometers with low sensitivity should be avoided. If using a reader with an adjustable gain, we recommend a high-gain setting.

Insufficient cells per well can lead to low RLU. Handle and plate cells according to the instructions to ensure a sufficient number of viable cells per well.

Low activity of Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent leads to low RLU. Store and handle the Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent according to the instructions. For best results, prepare immediately before use.

Symptoms

Weak assay response (low fold induction)

Causes and Comments

Optimize the concentration range of your test sample(s) to achieve a full dose response with complete upper and lower asymptotes. The EC₅₀ value obtained with the ICOS Bioassay may vary from the EC₅₀ value obtained using other methods such as primary T cell-based assays.

The assay is sensitive to the concentration of FBS in assay buffer. Optimize the FBS concentration from 0.5%-10% in assay buffer if assay performance is not ideal.

Optimize the assay incubation time within a range of 5–24 hours.

If untreated control RLU is less than 100-fold above plate reader background RLU, subtract plate background RLU from all samples before calculating fold induction.

Variability in assay performance

Variations in cell growth conditions including cell plating, harvest density, cell viability and cell doubling time may cause low assay performance and high assay variation. Avoid one-day cell passages whenever possible, especially with the ICOS Effector Cells. Use high-quality cell culture reagents (especially serum) and plasticware for maintaining cells in culture. Ensure consistent cell growth by handling the cells exactly according to the instructions.

Inappropriate cell handling during cell harvest, including long centrifuge times and high centrifuge speeds may cause low assay performance and high assay variation. Centrifuge the cells exactly according to the instructions.

Inappropriate cell freezing/DMSO exposure may cause low assay performance and high assay variation. Freeze the cells exactly according to the instructions.

Inappropriate cell counting methods may lead to variation in cell numbers in culture and assays and cause high assay variation. Ensure consistent and accurate cell counting methods.



8. References

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9. Appendix

9.A. Representative Assay Results

The following data were generated using the ICOS Bioassay, Propagation Model, using Control Ab, Anti-ICOS (Figure 10).

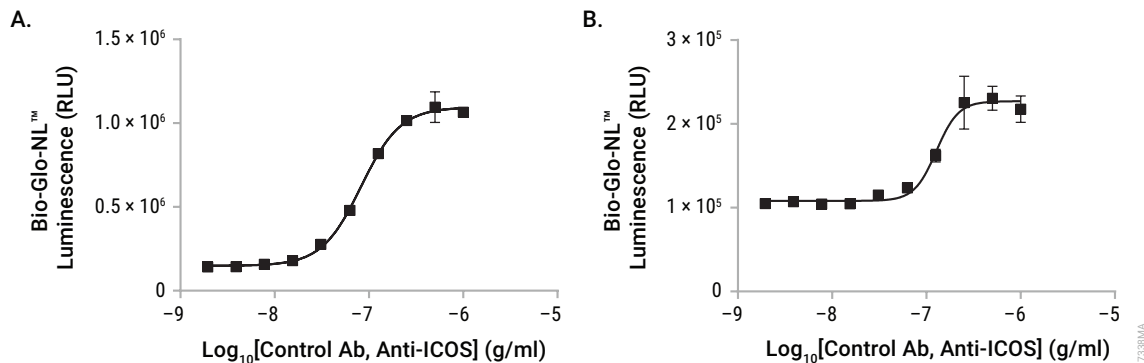


Figure 10. The ICOS Bioassay measures the activity of Control Ab, Anti-ICOS. FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells (**Panel A**) or aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells (**Panel B**) were added to a 96-well assay plate 18 hours prior to the assay. On the day of assay, ICOS Effector Cells and a titration of Control Ab, Anti-ICOS (Cat. # K1241), were added. After a 6-hour induction at 37°C, Bio-Glo-NL™ Reagent was added and luminescence measured using the GloMax® Discover System. Data were fitted to a four-parameter logistic curve using GraphPad Prism® software. The EC₅₀ was 83ng/ml and 131ng/ml and the fold induction was 7.7 and 2.1 when using FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells and aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells, respectively.



9.B. Composition of Buffers and Solutions

initial cell culture medium for ICOS Effector Cells

90% RPMI 1640 with L-glutamine and HEPES
10% FBS

cell growth medium for ICOS Effector Cells

90% RPMI 1640 with L-glutamine and HEPES
10% FBS
400µg/ml hygromycin B
1mg/ml G418 Geneticin
1mm sodium pyruvate
0.1mm MEM nonessential amino acids

cell freezing medium for ICOS Effector Cells, FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 and aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells

85% RPMI 1640 with L-glutamine and HEPES
10% FBS
5% DMSO

initial cell culture medium for FcγRIIb aAPC/ CHO-K1 and aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells

90% Ham's F12
10% FBS

cell growth medium for FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells

90% Ham's F12
10% FBS
10µg/ml blasticidin
400µg/ml hygromycin

cell growth medium for aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells

90% Ham's F12
10% FBS
200µg/ml hygromycin

cell plating medium for FcγRIIb aAPC/CHO-K1 and aAPC/CHO-K1 Cells

90% Ham's F12
10% FBS

assay buffer

99% RPMI 1640 with L-glutamine and HEPES
1% FBS

9.C. Related Products

Fc Effector Bioassays

Product	Size	Cat.#
ADCC Reporter Bioassay, Complete Kit (Raji)*	1 each	G7015
ADCC Reporter Bioassay, Core Kit*	1 each	G7010
ADCC Reporter Bioassay, F Variant, Core Kit**	1 each	G9790
ADCC Reporter Bioassay, Target Kit (Raji)*	1 each	G7016
FcγRIIa-H ADCP Reporter Bioassay, Complete Kit**	1 each	G9901
FcγRIIa-H ADCP Reporter Bioassay, Core Kit**	1 each	G9991
Mouse FcγRIV ADCC Bioassay, Complete Kit	1 each	M1201
Mouse FcγRIV ADCC Bioassay, Core Kit	1 each	M1211

*For Research Use Only. Not for use in diagnostic procedures.

**Not for Medical Diagnostic Use.

Additional kit formats are available.

Fc Effector Immunoassay

Product	Size	Cat.#
Lumit™ FcRn Binding Immunoassay	100 assays	W1151

Not for Medical Diagnostic Use. Additional kit formats and sizes are available.

Immune Checkpoint Bioassays

Product	Size	Cat.#
4-1BB Bioassay	1 each	JA2351
CD28 Bioassay	1 each	JA6701
CD28 Blockade Bioassay	1 each	JA6101
CD40 Bioassay	1 each	JA2151
CTLA-4 Blockade Bioassay	1 each	JA3001
GITR Bioassay	1 each	JA2291
ICOS Bioassay	1 each	JA6801
ICOS Blockade Bioassay	1 each	JA6001
LAG-3/MHCII Blockade Bioassay	1 each	JA1111
OX40 Bioassay	1 each	JA2191
PD-1/PD-L1 Blockade Bioassay	1 each	J1250
PD-1+TIGIT Combination Bioassay	1 each	J2211

Immune Checkpoint Bioassays (continued)

Product	Size	Cat.#
PD-L1 Negative Cells	1 each	J1191
TIGIT/CD155 Blockade Bioassay	1 each	J2201

Not for Medical Diagnostic Use. Additional kit formats are available.

T Cell Activation Bioassays

Product	Size	Cat.#
T Cell Activation Bioassay (IL-2)	1 each	J1651
T Cell Activation Bioassay (NFAT)	1 each	J1621

Not for Medical Diagnostic Use. Additional kit formats are available.

Cytokine and Growth Factor Bioassays

Product	Size	Cat.#
IL-2 Bioassay	1 each	JA2201
IL-6 Bioassay	1 each	JA2501
IL-12 Bioassay	1 each	JA2601
IL-15 Bioassay	1 each	JA2011
IL-23 Bioassay	1 each	JA2511
RANKL Bioassay	1 each	JA2701
VEGF Bioassay	1 each	GA2001

Not for Medical Diagnostic Use. Additional kit formats are available.

Control Antibodies and Proteins

Product	Size	Cat.#
Control Ab, Anti-4-1BB	50µg	K1161
Control Ab, Anti-CD-20	5 µg	GA1130
Control Ab, Anti-OX40	50µg	K1191
Control Ab, Anti-CD40	50µg	K1181
Control Ab, Anti-CTLA-4	100µg	JA1020
Control Ab, Anti-LAG-3	100µg	K1150
Control Ab, Anti-PD-1	100µg	J1201
Control Ab, Anti-TIGIT	100µg	J2051
Control Ab, Anti-TIM-3	100µg	K1210
Recombinant VEGF ligand	10µg	J2371

Detection Reagent

Product	Size	Cat.#
Bio-Glo™ Luciferase Assay System	10ml	G7941
	100ml	G7940
Bio-Glo-NL™ Luciferase Assay System	10ml	J3081
	100ml	J3082
	1,000ml	J3083

Not for Medical Diagnostic Use.

Luminometers

Product	Size	Cat.#
GloMax® Navigator System	1 each	GM2000
GloMax® Discover System	1 each	GM3000
GloMax® Explorer System	1 each	GM3500

For Research Use Only. Not for use in diagnostic procedures.

Note: Additional Fc Effector, Immune Checkpoint, T Cell Activation and Cytokine Bioassays are available through Promega Elite Access. To view and order Promega Bioassay products visit:

www.promega.com/products/reporter-bioassays/ or email: eliteaccess@promega.com

10. Summary of Changes

The following changes were made to the 9/21 revision of this document:

1. A new Limited Use statement was added to pages 2 and 30.
2. The cover image was updated.



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