Natural genetic competence is a physiological state of bacteria that allows for the uptake and chromosomal integration of exogenously supplied DNA and thus facilitates strain improvement. Most of the industrially relevant Bacilli do not or only poorly develop genetic competence although genes encoding the DNA-uptake machinery are routinely present\(^1\). Indeed, we could show that the genetic regulation of competence development of *B. licheniformis* differs in several important aspects from the Gram-positive model organism *Bacillus subtilis* in which competence development is *quorum sensing* dependent\(^2\). All *B. licheniformis* representatives known to efficiently develop genetic competence were found to carry mutations in global regulator genes\(^3\) rendering them competent. Inducible overexpression of the key positive transcriptional regulator for competence allowed for efficient genetic handling and strain improvement\(^4,5\).

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