

Reporting Summary

Nature Portfolio wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. For further information on Nature Portfolio policies, see our [Editorial Policies](#) and the [Editorial Policy Checklist](#).

Statistics

For all statistical analyses, confirm that the following items are present in the figure legend, table legend, main text, or Methods section.

n/a Confirmed

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| ☐ | ☒ | The exact sample size (n) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement |
| ☒ | ☐ | A statement on whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly |
| ☐ | ☒ | The statistical test(s) used AND whether they are one- or two-sided
<i>Only common tests should be described solely by name; describe more complex techniques in the Methods section.</i> |
| ☒ | ☐ | A description of all covariates tested |
| ☒ | ☐ | A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as tests of normality and adjustment for multiple comparisons |
| ☒ | ☐ | A full description of the statistical parameters including central tendency (e.g. means) or other basic estimates (e.g. regression coefficient) AND variation (e.g. standard deviation) or associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g. confidence intervals) |
| ☐ | ☒ | For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. F , t , r) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and P value noted
<i>Give P values as exact values whenever suitable.</i> |
| ☒ | ☐ | For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings |
| ☒ | ☐ | For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes |
| ☒ | ☐ | Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen's d , Pearson's r), indicating how they were calculated |

Our web collection on [statistics for biologists](#) contains articles on many of the points above.

Software and code

Policy information about [availability of computer code](#)

Data collection	cryoSPARC v.4.2, Andor Solis software v4.32
Data analysis	CD-HIT v4.8.1, MAFFT v7.475, trimAl v1.4.1, IQtree v2.1.12, Treemmer v0.3, FastTree v2.1.10, HMMER v3.3.2, eggNOG mapper v.2, RNAmmer v.1.2, CCTyper v1.8.0, HISAT2 v2.1.0, Bbtools v38.90, ChimeraX v1.7.1, Coot v0.9.8.92, Phenix v1.21.1-5286, FRETboard v0.0.3.

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the research but not yet described in published literature, software must be made available to editors and reviewers. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). See the Nature Portfolio [guidelines for submitting code & software](#) for further information.

Data

Policy information about [availability of data](#)

All manuscripts must include a [data availability statement](#). This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:

- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A description of any restrictions on data availability
- For clinical datasets or third party data, please ensure that the statement adheres to our [policy](#)

The data generated in this study are provided in the paper in the Data Availability section.

Research involving human participants, their data, or biological material

Policy information about studies with [human participants or human data](#). See also policy information about [sex, gender \(identity/presentation\), and sexual orientation](#) and [race, ethnicity and racism](#).

Reporting on sex and gender Not applicable

Reporting on race, ethnicity, or other socially relevant groupings Not applicable

Population characteristics Not applicable

Recruitment Not applicable

Ethics oversight Not applicable

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.

Field-specific reporting

Please select the one below that is the best fit for your research. If you are not sure, read the appropriate sections before making your selection.

☒ Life sciences ☐ Behavioural & social sciences ☐ Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences

For a reference copy of the document with all sections, see [nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf](https://www.nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf)

Life sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Sample size 496 available Asgard archaeal metagenome-assembled genomes were used for Argonaute protein identification.

Data exclusions No data was excluded

Replication All attempts at replication were successful

Randomization Describe how samples/organisms/participants were allocated into experimental groups. If allocation was not random, describe how covariates were controlled OR if this is not relevant to your study, explain why.

Blinding Describe whether the investigators were blinded to group allocation during data collection and/or analysis. If blinding was not possible, describe why OR explain why blinding was not relevant to your study.

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

We require information from authors about some types of materials, experimental systems and methods used in many studies. Here, indicate whether each material, system or method listed is relevant to your study. If you are not sure if a list item applies to your research, read the appropriate section before selecting a response.

Materials & experimental systems

n/a Involved in the study

☐ ☒ Antibodies

☐ ☒ Eukaryotic cell lines

☒ ☐ Palaeontology and archaeology

☒ ☐ Animals and other organisms

☒ ☐ Clinical data

☒ ☐ Dual use research of concern

☒ ☐ Plants

Methods

n/a Involved in the study

☒ ☐ ChIP-seq

☒ ☐ Flow cytometry

☒ ☐ MRI-based neuroimaging

Antibodies

Antibodies used Rabbit polyclonal FLAG antibody (Sigma, F7425) ; rat monoclonal Tubulin antibody (Invitrogen, MA1-80017)

Validation Describe the validation of each primary antibody for the species and application, noting any validation statements on the manufacturer's website, relevant citations, antibody profiles in online databases, or data provided in the manuscript.

Eukaryotic cell lines

Policy information about [cell lines and Sex and Gender in Research](#)

Cell line source(s)	AGO1/2/3 KO HCT116 transfected with pKO.1 derived plasmids
Authentication	Cell line was authenticated using Western Blot
Mycoplasma contamination	<i>Confirm that all cell lines tested negative for mycoplasma contamination OR describe the results of the testing for mycoplasma contamination OR declare that the cell lines were not tested for mycoplasma contamination.</i>
Commonly misidentified lines (See ICLAC register)	<i>Name any commonly misidentified cell lines used in the study and provide a rationale for their use.</i>

Plants

Seed stocks	Not applicable
Novel plant genotypes	Not applicable
Authentication	Not applicable