MULTIMODE PLATE READER WITH LIVE-CELL IMAGING AND REAL-TIME CYTOMETRY.

Spark® Cyto.

TECAN.

LIFE HAPPENS IN REAL TIME.

Spark Cyto is a multimode plate reader combining bright field and fluorescence imaging with industry-leading detection technologies to enable real time image cytometry, unlocking new possibilities for your 2D and 3D cell-based research.

Your cells don't stay static when you leave the lab, so your research requires a dynamic instrument that ensures you never miss a critical biological event. Spark Cyto works in real time with integrated cell incubation capabilities, and uses parallel data acquisition and analysis to deliver meaningful insights for cell-based assays.

With Spark Cyto, you now have the ability to unite qualitative and quantitative information into unique multiparameter data sets faster than before.

More insights delivered in real time, and more cells analyzed.

Spark Cyto brings together a unique combination of patented technologies to ensure you can truly investigate your entire 2D and 3D cell population. It gives you the ability to record the whole well area of a 96- or 384-well microplate with just one image – no tiling or distortion – meaning you never miss any information.

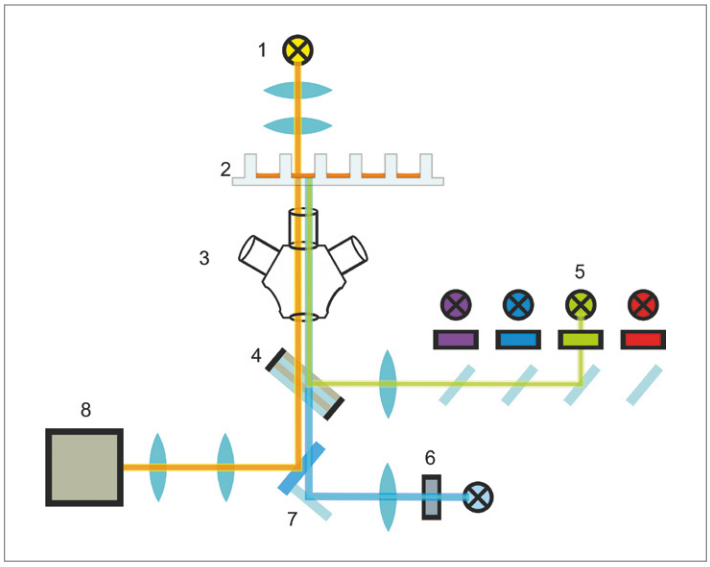
Objective	NA	Pixel resolution	Optical resolution	Field of view (mm)
2x	0.08	3.45 µm	4.50 µm	8.47 x 7.09
4x	0.13	1.72 µm	2.77 µm	4.24 x 3.54
10x	0.30	0.69 µm	1.20 µm	1.69 x 1.42

A dedicated optical set-up for live-cell cytometry in microplates, from 6- to 384-well formats.

Using three objectives, five LEDs (bright field and fluorescence excitation), a multiband filter set and a CMOS camera, Spark Cyto eliminates pixel shifts and delivers high quality images in a flash.

Spark Cyto combines three magnification levels with four channels for fluorescence and bright field imaging, enabling high quality cell analysis for a wide range of applications.

Color	Excitation (nm)	Emission (nm)
Blue	381–400	414–450
Green	461–487	500–530
Red	543–566	580–611
Far red	626–644	661–800



Schematic diagram of imager module. (1) LED for bright field; (2) microplate with sample; (3) objective; (4) multiband filter set; (5) LEDs and excitation filters for fluorescence; (6) autofocus unit; (7) reflection mirror; (8) CMOS camera.

Automated Z-stacking – for more depth resolution

By capturing images at different focal planes, you gain a comprehensive view of your samples, including entire spheroids or organoids, without losing any details. Analyzing these images in a 2D projection enables rapid analysis, boosting throughput and expediting your research.

Autofocus enabled – stay focused on your research

Spark Cyto focuses on each individual well using the best approach for each plate.
Through a patented LED-based autofocus system, Spark Cyto projects a grid pattern on the sample surface, assuring the exact focal plane for each flat well.
Image-based autofocus is instead optimized for spheroid and organoids, allowing you to work with your samples and keep your workflow unaltered while working with U-shaped microplates.

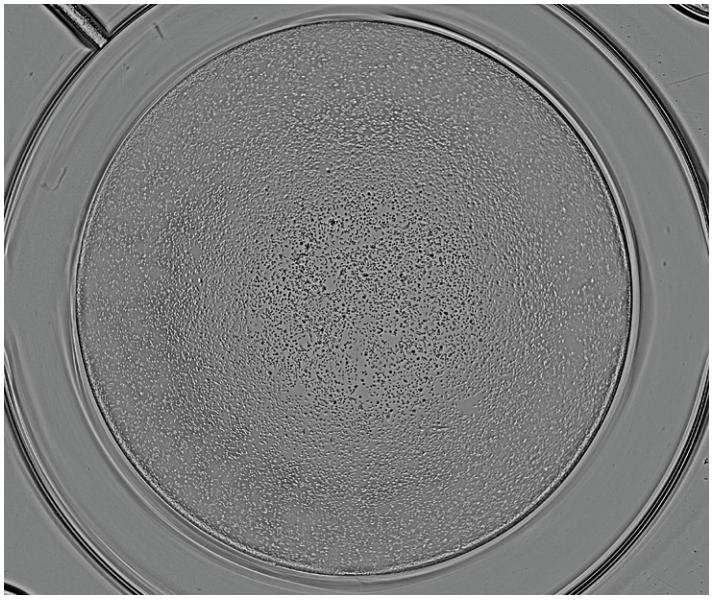
Auto-exposure – fast and easy image optimization

Setting the optimal exposure time for images with a wide range of signal intensities can be a laborious process. The auto-exposure function in Spark Cyto's live viewer automates the optimization of exposure settings, creating an ideal balance and minimizing under- and overexposure of cellular signals.

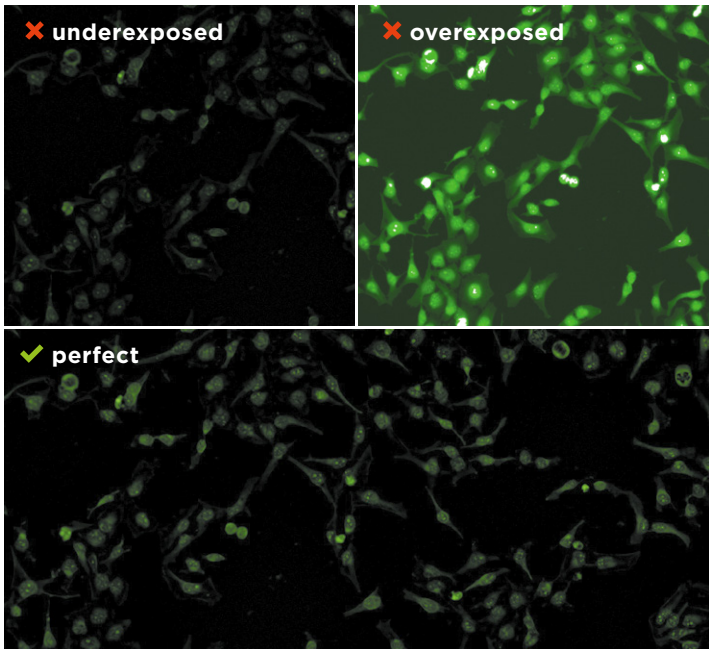
One single image can tell the whole story

Spark Cyto captures the whole well (96- and 384-well plates) with a single image, giving you a real picture of your research.

It is based on a proprietary patented approach where image acquisition with the 2x (96-well plates) and 4x (384-well plates) objective is combined with a large camera chip and advanced imaging algorithms to give you accurate results.



Single image of an entire well from a 96-well plate. No tiling or edge-to-edge optical distortion leads to superior results when analyzing cell populations.

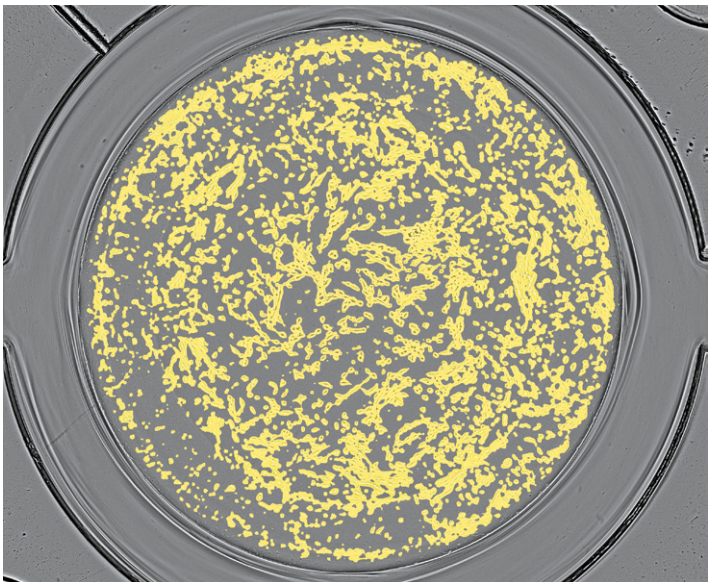


The auto-exposure function helps to capture optimal images of all your cells without lengthy optimization steps.

APPLICATIONS.

Confluence

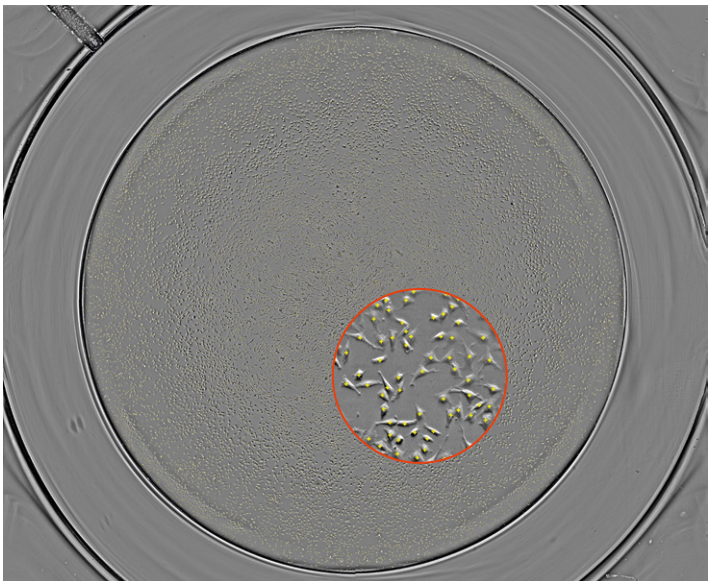
Use the bright field imaging channel to provide a quick overview of a well's cell density. Cell confluence is calculated automatically by the software, and displayed as a yellow overlay for easy visual confirmation. In addition, you can use the roughness factor as a simple indicator of cell death.



Whole well image from a 96-well plate, acquired with the 2x objective, showing NHDF cells with confluence evaluation mask.

Label-free cell counting

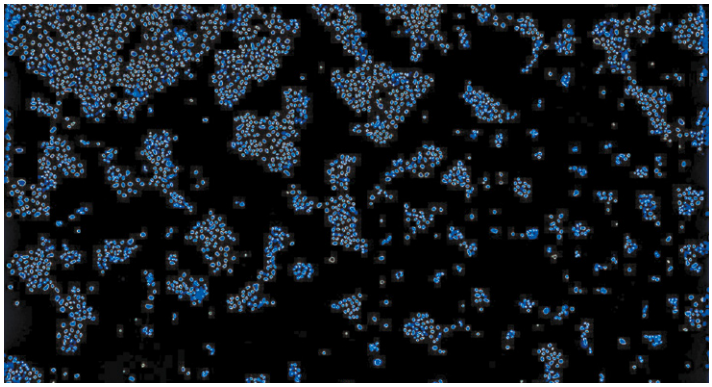
This feature offers a fast and reliable way to count cells in bright field images directly, without the need of cellular dyes. Using a deep learning algorithm, a yellow cross is overlaid on identified cells for easy visualization, and the total cell count is displayed for each well.



Whole well image of a 96-well plate showing HeLa cells with bright field cell counting yellow overlay, acquired with the 4x objective.

Nuclei counting

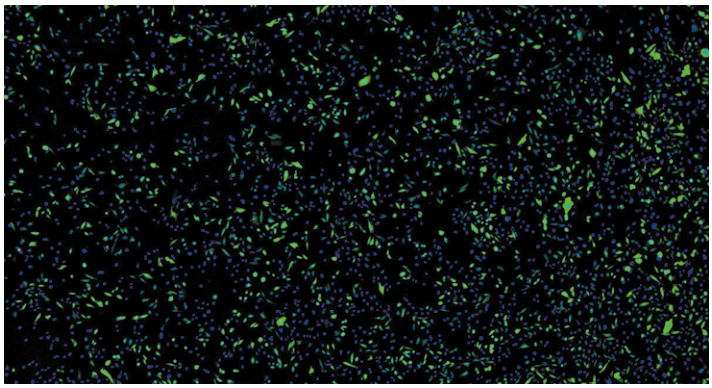
Effortlessly quantify nuclei with precision. Count fluorescent dyes binding to nuclear DNA and normalize subsequent measurements based on cell count, enhancing the reliability of your analysis.



Whole well image from a 384-well plate, acquired with the 4x objective, showing CHO cells with nuclei counting mask.

Transfection efficiency

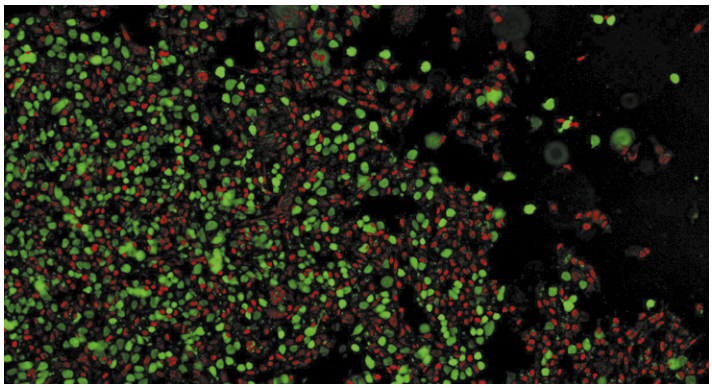
Automatically determine transfection rates for cells containing at least two fluorophores e.g. a nuclear dye such as Hoechst 33342 and GFP. The images from different channels are overlaid and analyzed to determine the transfection efficiency in the cell population.



Centered image of CHO cells cultured in a 96-well plate, acquired with the 4x objective, showing an overlay of the blue and green channels.

Cell viability

Use double stainings such as LIVE/DEAD to discriminate between live (green) and dead (red) cells in a population. Using two fluorescent dyes, such as calcein AM (live cells) and propidium iodide (dead cells), you can image and analyze your cell population in minutes.



Centered image of HeLa cells cultured in a 24-well plate, acquired with the 10x objective, showing an overlay of the green and red channels.

Cell death

Spark Cyto can detect cell death, and discriminate between apoptosis and necrosis, using differential staining, for example:

- **Hoechst 33342 (blue)** – nuclear stain
- **Propidium iodide (red)** – necrotic cell stain
- **Annexin V-FITC / Alexa Fluor® 488 (green)** – binds to the early apoptosis marker phosphatidylserine

The software can uniquely identify viable cells (blue), necrotic (red), early (blue & green) or late apoptotic (blue & green & red), giving the full picture of your cell death assay.

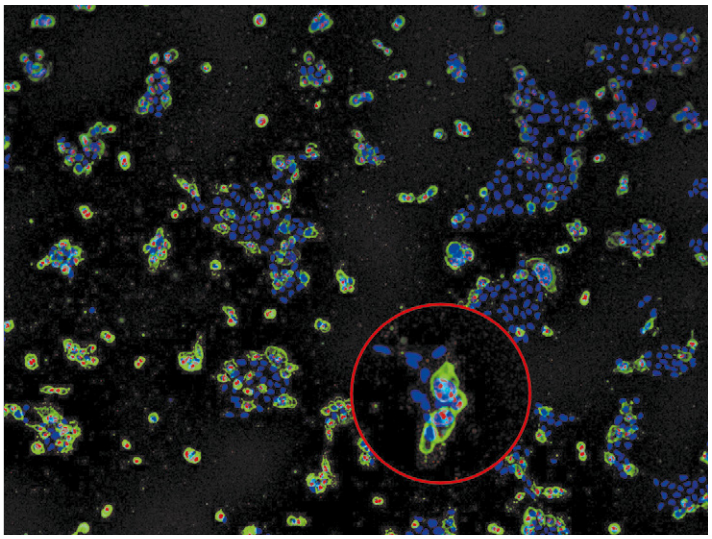
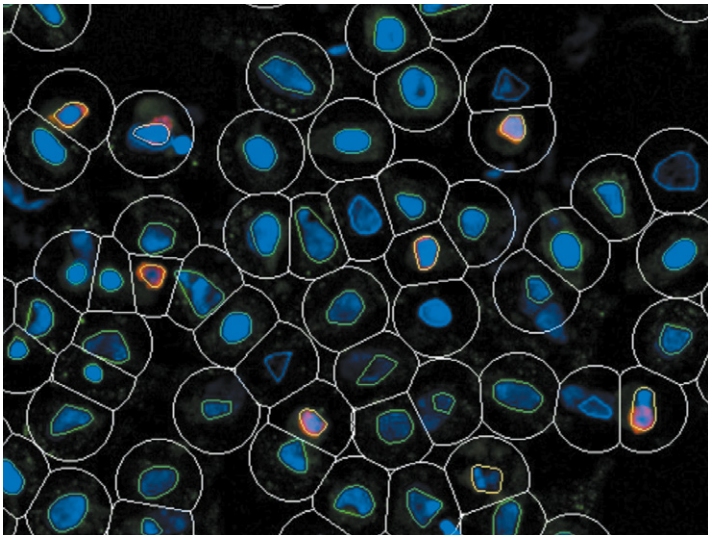


Image of A431 cells cultured in a 96-well plate, acquired with the 10x objective, showing an overlay of the blue, green and red channels.

Customize your assay

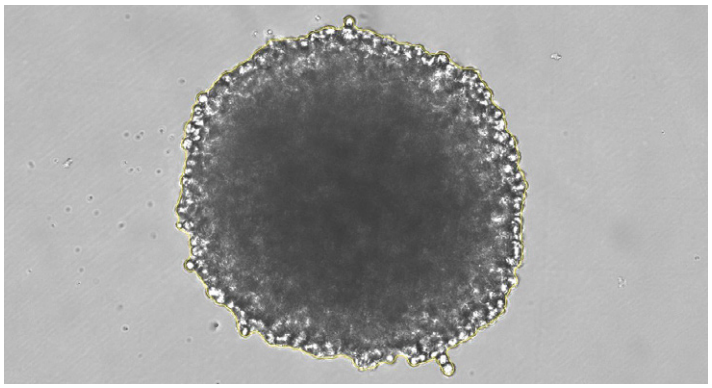
Spark Cyto's easy-to-use software is ideal to create your customized method for counting and analyzing cells with multiple labels. A fluorescent marker for nuclei, and up to two additional labels, are automatically analyzed to characterize your cells.



HeLa cells cultured in a 96-well plate, acquired with the 10x objective. Cells have been treated with a low dose of demecolcine, stained with Hoechst 33342 to visualise the nuclei, and labelled with anti-alpha-tubulin (Alexa Fluor 488) and anti-phospho-histone H3 (Alexa Fluor 647).

Single and multiple spheroids

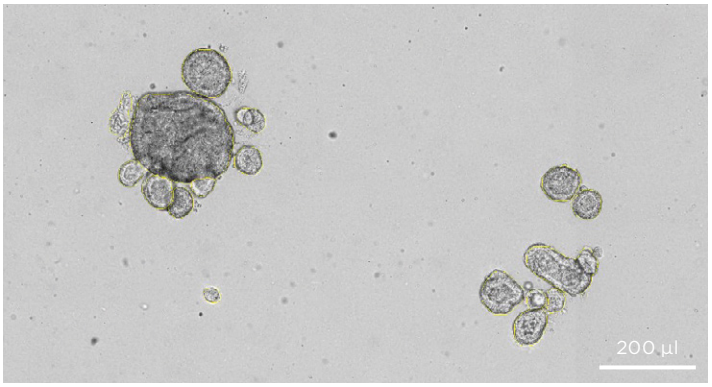
Spark Cyto's imaging technology utilizes AI algorithms for precise segmentation and real-time analysis of single and multiple spheroids with the brightfield or fluorescent channels. This enables detailed monitoring of growth patterns, morphological changes, and treatment responses.



Brightfield Image of a single spheroid of HeLa cells cultured in a 96 round-bottom plate, acquired with the 10x objective.

Organoid analysis

Spark Cyto ensures precise segmentation and real-time analysis of organoids, whether in brightfield or fluorescence. Utilizing AI-based algorithms, it can accurately delineate organoid structures, facilitating real-time monitoring of organoid development, growth, and response to treatments.



Dog liver organoids cultured in a 96-well plate, acquired with the 10x objective. The brightfield channel is used for the segmentation mask.

Live-cell kinetics

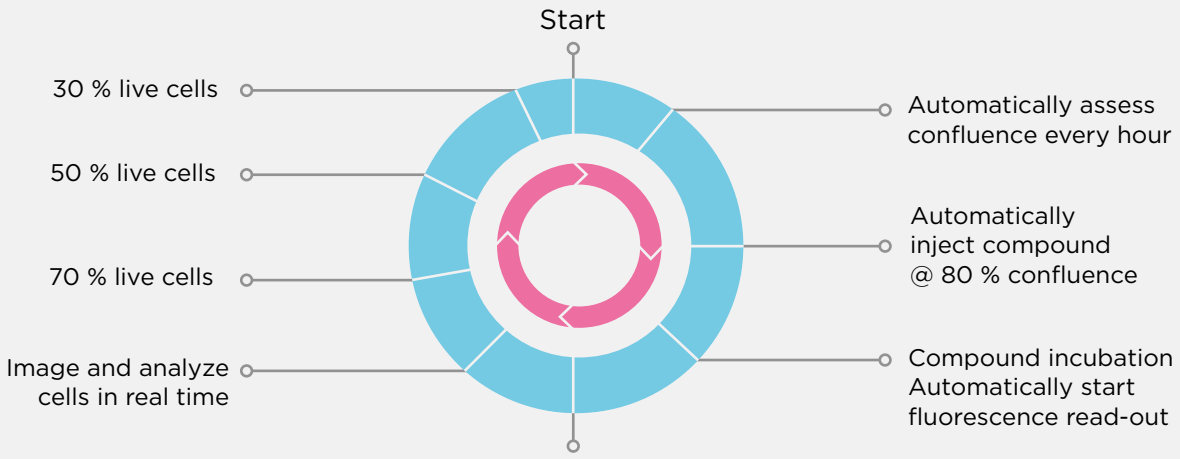
Analyze your 2D and 3D cell cultures over multiple days while maintaining sample viability through precise temperature, gas, and humidity control. Witness critical events in real-time and generate captivating videos to track changes and gain valuable insights.

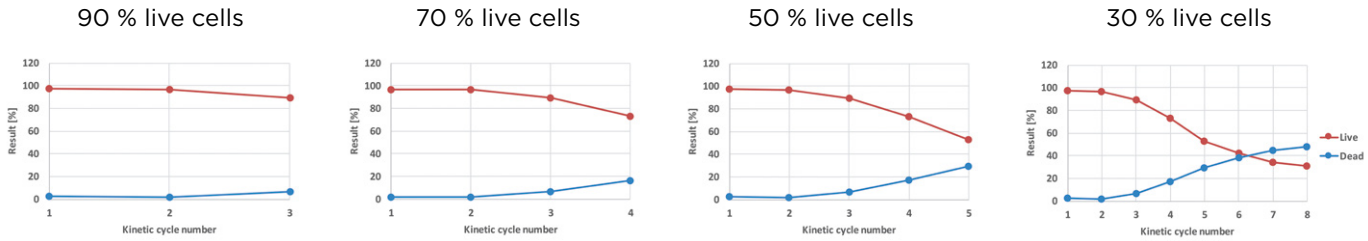
NEVER MISS A CRITICAL BIOLOGICAL EVENT.

Automation of live-cell experiments with Real Time Experimental Control (REC™)

REC grants you the ability to create novel experimental workflows and unlock new research possibilities for multiplexed data. The system combines standard detection technologies and imaging capabilities with proprietary software to enable kinetic experiments to be performed automatically. For example, the system can inject a reagent or start a fluorescence measurement once a user-defined population status or signal threshold is reached, such as a confluence of 80 percent.

37 °C I 5 % CO_2 I Evaporation protection I 16 % O_2





Automatic kinetic measurements for live/dead cells with an interval of 2 h over a time period of ca. 20 h.

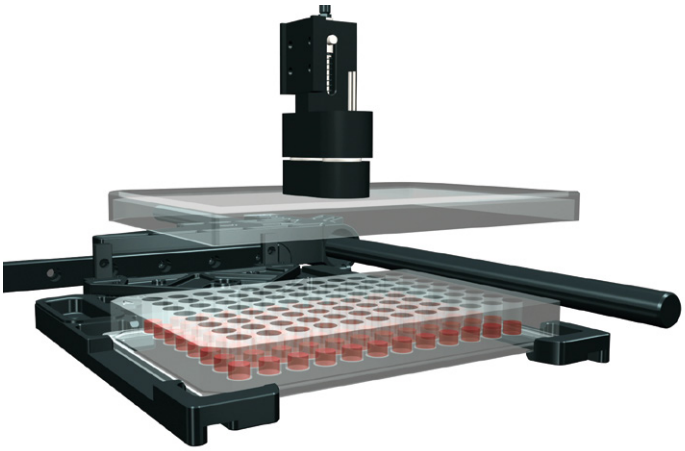
Environmental control comes as standard

Spark Cyto is equipped with a unique environmental control system that allows you to maintain a stable environment for your assays, effectively eliminating the risk that temperature fluctuations or evaporation could pose to your results. Spark Cyto puts these features right at your fingertips:

- Uniform temperature control (up to 42 °C)
- Dynamic gas control (CO_2 and O_2)
- Humidity control via patented Lid Lifter™ and Humidity Cassette

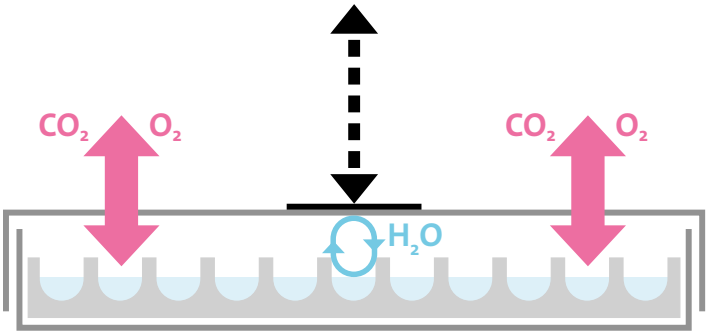
Lid Lifter

Spark's integrated and patented lid-lifting function establishes an ideal environment for long-term kinetic assays and reduces the risk of sample contamination. Whether you want to dispense reagents without the need for manual intervention or maintain optimal environmental conditions without compromising evaporation protection, Spark Cyto is the only reader to offer this benefit.



Humidity control for optimal evaporation protection

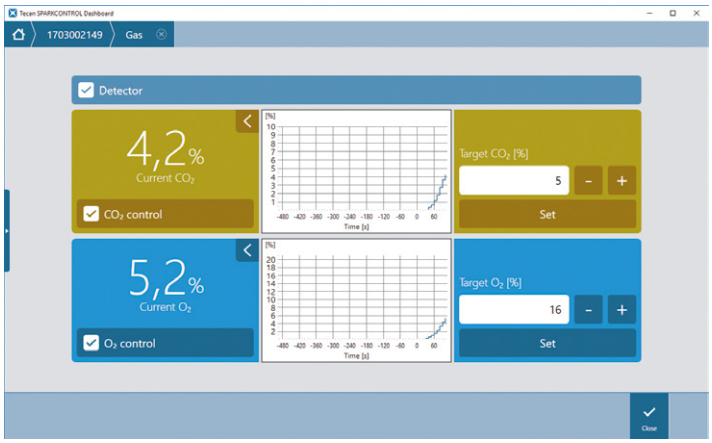
Maintaining humidity levels of 95 percent or higher is essential for unimpaired cell viability and growth, and miminizing evaporation is essential for maintaining consistent concentrations during long-term assays. Spark's patented Humidity Cassette is a cost-effective s olution t o m inimize evaporation.



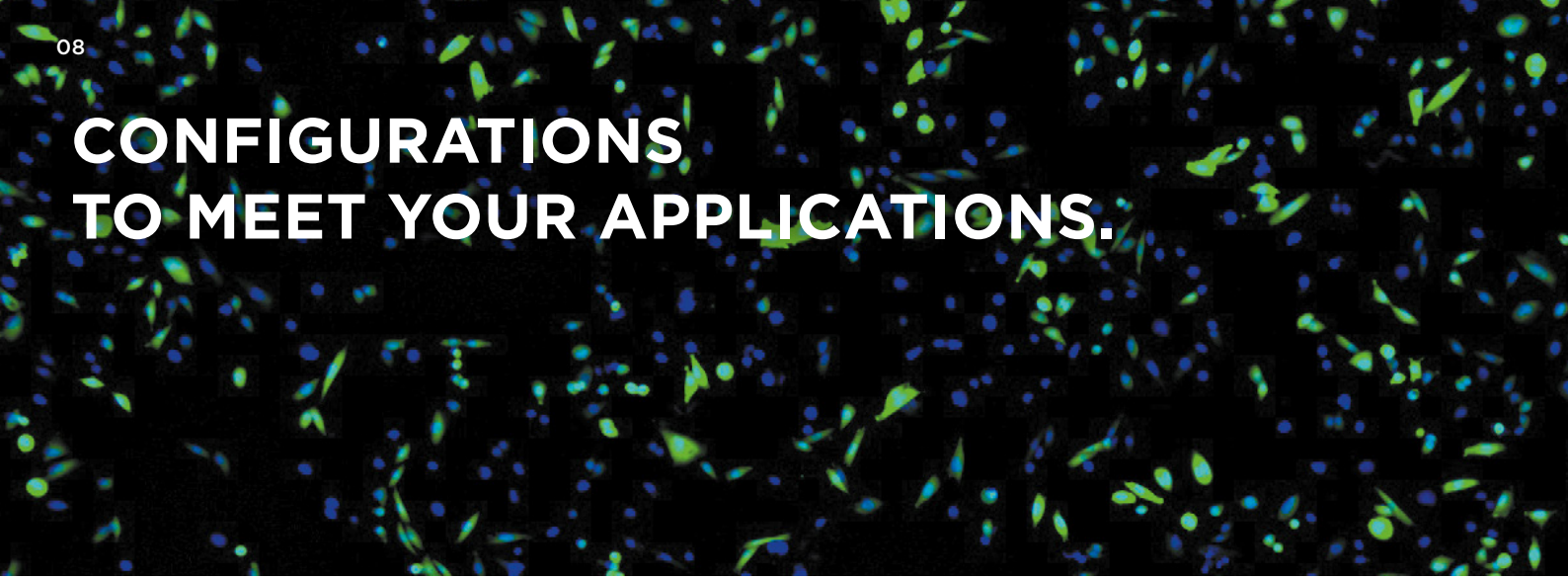
More parameters measured

The system's Method Editor offers u nique o ptions f or researchers looking to customize their assays:

- **User-defined protocols** – for automated image acquisition and analysis
- **Imaging only** – allowing acquisition and export of files to any third-party image analysis software, such as Fiji or CellProfiler™



You have full control of the environmental conditions during a run, including the temperature and the CO_2 and O_2 levels inside the reader.



CONFIGURATIONS TO MEET YOUR APPLICATIONS.

No matter the configuration of your Spark Cyto, you have a fully equipped system ready for live-cell imaging cytometry.

Capabilities Spark Cyto	100	300	400	500	600
Fluorescence Imaging	●	●	●	●	●
Brightfield imaging	●	●	●	●	●
Digital phase contrast imaging	●	●	●	●	●
Absorbance UV/vis monochromator – STD 384		●	●		
Absorbance UV/vis monochromator – ENH 1536				●	●
Fluorescence – STD 384		●			
Fluorescence – ENH 1536			●	●	●
Fluorescence filter top/bottom		●		●	
Fluorescence monochromator top/bottom			●		
Fluorescence Fusion Optics top/bottom					●
Fluorescence variable bandwidth			●		●
Fluorescence polarization			●	●	●
Fluorescence dichroic mirrors			●	●	●
Luminescence - STD 384 / multi-color and scanning		●	●		
Luminescence – ENH 1536 / multi-color and scanning				●	●
Alpha technology					●
Lid Lifter	●	●	●	●	●
Heating	●	●	●	●	●
CO_2 control	●	●	●	●	●
O_2 control	●	●	●	●	●

Spark Cyto sets a new standard for fluorescence imaging microplate readers by offering the following features with every configuration:

- Lid Lifter
- Integrated gas control (CO_2/O_2)
- Heating
- LED- and image-based autofocus
- Objectives (2x, 4x, 10x)
- 5-LED excitation, 4 color channels
- Digital phase contrast
- SparkControl™ software
- ImageAnalyzer™ software
- Instrument control unit

All configurations can be equipped with additional options:

- Reagent dispensers with heating and stirring
- Humidity Cassette
- NanoQuant Plate™*
- QC tools for IQ/OQ services
- Spark-Stack™**

* Not available for Spark Cyto 100.
** Patented microplate stacker. Supports all read modes without imaging. Not compatible with the Humidity Cassette option.

The NanoQuant Plate allows parallel quantification and analysis of up to 16 nucleic acid or protein samples, in volumes as little as 2 µl.

Reagent dispenser with heating and stirring enhances application flexibility: Spark injectors offer a heating and stirring option for reagent storage. This is especially beneficial for cell-based applications, minimizing cold shock caused by reagent addition and enabling automated dispensing of viable cells within the reader.

Lid Lifter discs

The Lid Lifter is a convenient solution that helps researchers to increase workflow automation to decrease hands-on time for long-term incubation and in-between measurements, and further reduce sample evaporation. Simply add the sample to a Tecan microplate, cover with a lid with a Lid Lifter disc attached, place in the Spark reader and incubate for as long as required. The Spark Lid Lifter will remove the lid from the plate for readings at specified time intervals.

Lid Lifter discs come in 50 pcs/box.

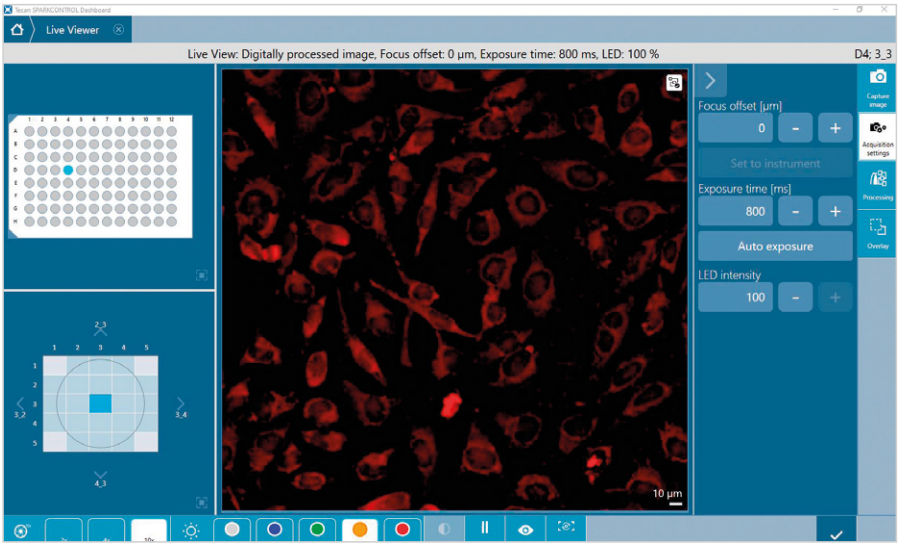
SOFTWARE.

SPARKCONTROL

Easy-to-use software designed for long-term studies.

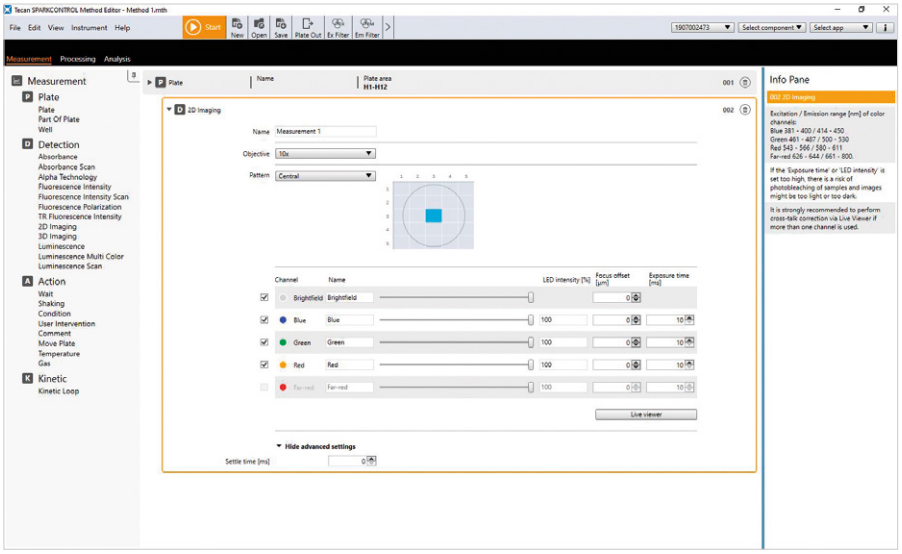
Live viewer mode

The live viewer mode of SparkControl software turns the reader into a digital microscope, allowing manual inspection of cells and optimization of focus levels, exposure times and LED intensities.



The live viewer mode turns the reader into a digital microscope.

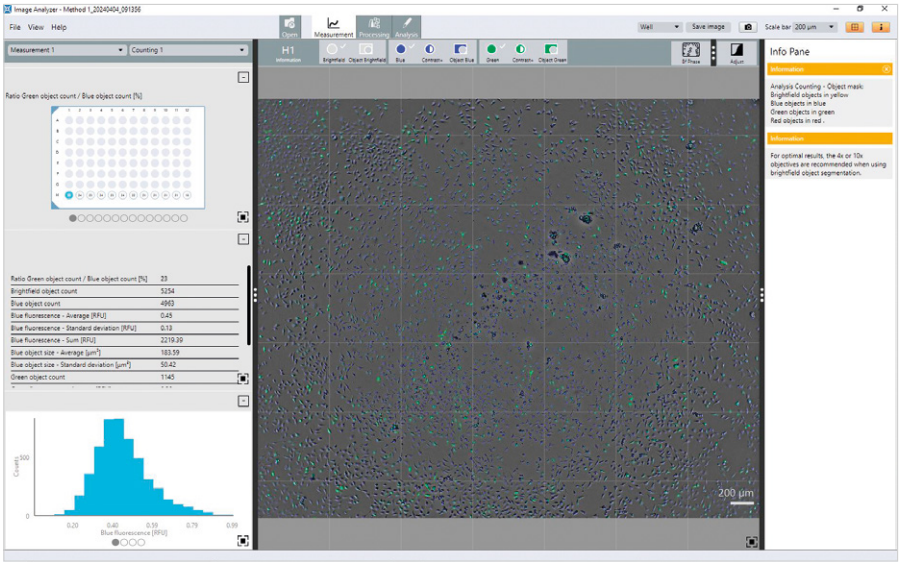
SparkControl enables automation of long-term kinetic assays, providing a hands-off solution for complex experimental set-ups. The imaging strip can be combined with any other programming strip, making it effortless and straightforward to create multiplex assays. The software uses an icon-driven, 'drag and drop' approach, making it suitable for users at any skill level.



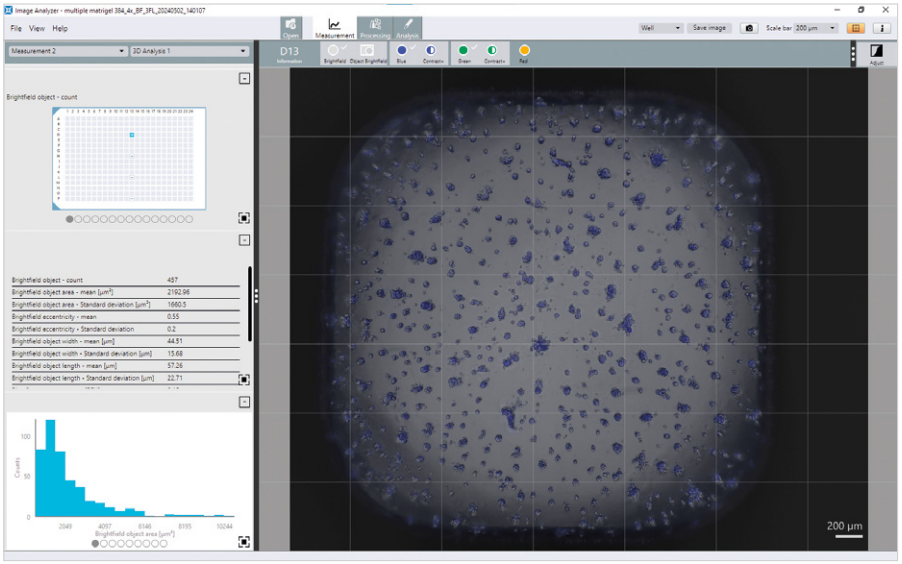
An imaging strip in SparkControl's Method Editor.

ImageAnalyzer

Images acquired with the Spark Cyto can be automatically processed with ImageAnalyzer, Tecan's proprietary imaging software package. ImageAnalyzer offers you an array of customization options, making it easy to adjust and optimize imaging parameters such as cell size, segmentation and cell gating. Predefined analysis reports provide comprehensive and effortless documentation of your experiments.



Spark Cyto's ImageAnalyzer offers easy data analysis for object segmentation, gating and object counting.



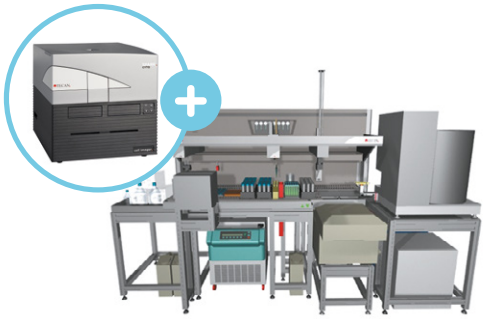
Achieve multi-parametric analysis of 3D cell models with Spark Cyto's ImageAnalyzer.

AUTOMATION.

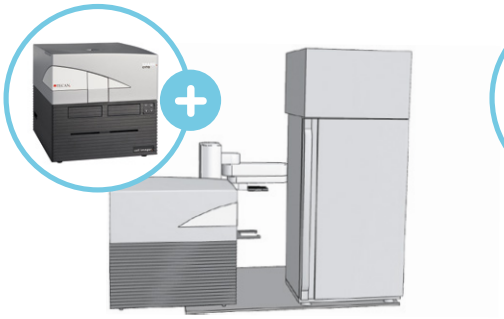
And if you need a higher throughput?

Scale up your research with an automated live-cell analysis system. Tecan offers scalable automation solutions for end-point and kinetic live-cell experiments to meet your capacity needs – from a simple benchtop extension with a compact multi-plate cell incubator, to full workflow automation with Tecan's Fluent® liquid handling automation platform.

Enables higher throughput applications including cell imaging



Full workflow automation from sample preparation to detection

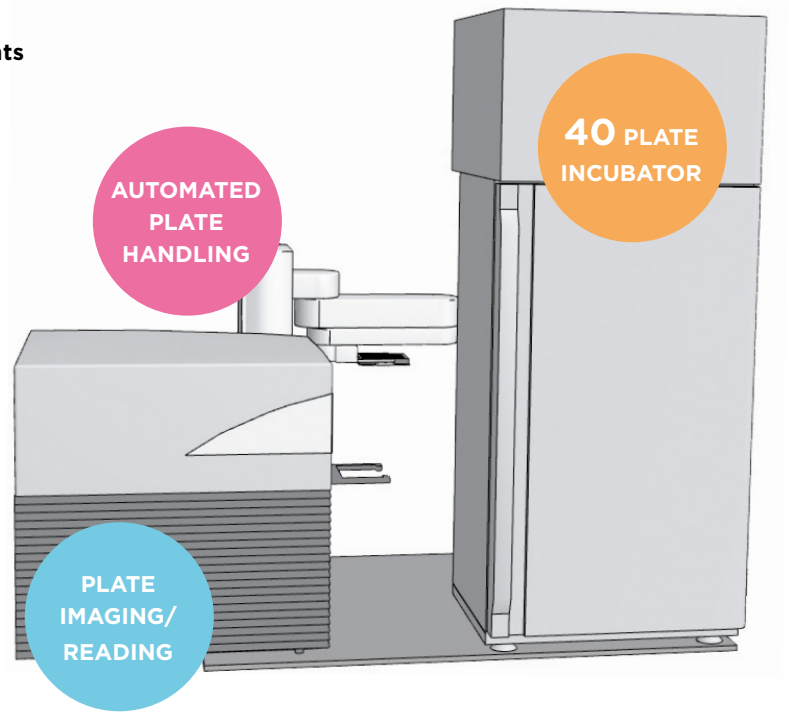


High throughput live-cell assays with up to 40 plates

Third-party integration/ automation to meet your specific needs

Complete walk away automation for live-cell experiments

- Automated cell incubation and analysis of up to 40 plates increases throughput
- Multiplexed kinetic growth analysis (eg. luminescence and imaging) increases reproducibility
- Patented lid-lifting technology in Spark Cyto protects plates outside the incubator, saving costs for expensive safety cabinets
- Expandable with additional instruments, such as a dispenser or washer, for complete workflow automation



CAPABILITIES.*

Applications

- Single and multiple spheroid analysis
- Organoid analysis
- Label-free cell counting
- Nuclei counting
- Reporter gene expression
- Cell viability
- Apoptosis
- Confluence assessment
- Cell migration and wound healing
- ELISAs
- Low-volume DNA/RNA quantification
- Nucleic acid labeling efficiency
- Protein quantification
- Reporter gene assays
- HTRF®, DELFIA® and LanthaScreen®
- Transcreener®
- DLR®
- BRET – including NanoBRET®

Detection modes

- Fluorescence imaging (blue, green, red, far red)
- Bright field imaging
- Digital phase contrast imaging
- Absorbance – incl. UV/vis
- Fluorescence top and bottom
- Time-resolved fluorescence (TRF)
- Full spectral scanning capability for all measurement modes
- FRET
- TR-FRET
- Fluorescence polarization (FP)
- Luminescence – glow, flash, multicolor, scanning
- AlphaScreen®, AlphaLISA® and AlphaPlex®

Additional options

- Reagent dispensers with heating and stirring
- Humidity Cassette
- NanoQuant Plate
- QC tools for IQ/OQ services
- Spark-Stack microplate stacker
- Automation interface for higher throughput

*Capabilities depend on the Spark Cyto configurations.

Typical performance values[+]

Fluorescence imaging and cytometry

Imaging technologies	Fluorescence, bright field, digital phase contrast			
Imaging methods	Single color, multicolor, end-point, kinetics, whole well			
Sample formats	6- to 384-well ANSI/SLAS-format microplates			
Camera sensor	Grayscale, 5 Mpixel, CMOS Sony			
Objectives	2x (NA 0.08), 4x (NA 0.13), 10x (NA 0.30)			
Optical properties	Objective	Pixel resolution	Optical resolution	Field of view
	2x	3.45 µm	4.50 µm	8.47 x 7.09 mm
	4x	1.72 µm	2.77 µm	4.24 x 3.54 mm
	10x	0.69 µm	1.20 µm	1.69 x 1.42 mm
Channels	Bright field, four fluorescence channels (blue, green, red, far-red)			
Autofocus	Proprietary astigmatism-based technology and image-based autofocus algorithm			
Field of view	Whole well, 96- and 384-well imaging with a single image (2x and 4x objectives)			
Image collection rate	≤12 min for 96-well plate, whole well image with 2x, bright field and digital phase contrast			
	≤15 min for 96-well plate, center image with 10x, bright field, digital phase contrast + 1 fluorescence channel			
Analysis speed	≤20 min for 96-well plate, whole well image with 2x, bright field and digital phase contrast including real time confluence assessment			

Fluorescence – enhanced

Light source	High energy xenon flash lamp
Spectral range	Ex: 230–900 nm
	Em: 280–900 nm
Wavelength accuracy	Ex: <0.5 nm; Em: <0.5 nm
Wavelength reproducibility	<0.5 nm
Bandwidth	Adjustable from 5–50 nm
Optical mirrors	50 %, 510, 560, 625 nm built-in;
	410, 430, 458, 593, 660 nm
	user-selectable dichroics
Well scanning	Up to 100 x 100 data points

FI (fluorescence intensity)	Limit of detection[1]
Filter - top	≤8 amol/well (10 µl; 1,536-well)
Fusion* - top	≤15 amol/well (10 µl; 1,536-well)
Mono - top	≤20 amol/well (10 µl; 1,536-well)
Filter - bottom	≤180 amol/well (10 µl; 1,536-well)
Fusion - bottom	≤200 amol/well (10 µl; 1,536-well)
Mono - bottom	≤220 amol/well (10 µl; 1,536-well)

FP (fluorescence polarization)[2]

Spectral range	300–850 nm
Precision - Filter	≤1.25 mP
Precision - Fusion	≤2.0 mP
Precision - Mono	≤2.5 mP

TRF (time-resolved fluorescence)[3]

Limit of detection - Filter	≤0.5 amol/well (20 µl; 384-well SV)
Limit of detection - Fusion	≤0.6 amol/well (20 µl; 384-well SV)
Limit of detection - Mono	≤0.7 amol/well (20 µl; 384-well SV)

Fastest read time

384-well plate (FI)	≤22 sec
1,536-well plate (FI)	≤34 sec

Fluorescence – standard

Light source	Dedicated xenon flash lamp
Spectral range	Ex: 230–900 nm
	Em: 280–900 nm
Wavelength accuracy	Ex: <1 nm; Em: <2 nm
Wavelength reproducibility	<1 nm
Bandwidth	Fixed @ 20 nm
Optical mirrors	50 %; 510 nm dichroic
Well scanning	Up to 100 x 100 data points

FI (fluorescence intensity)	Limit of detection[1]
Filter - top	≤25 amol/well (100 µl; 384 well)
Fusion - top	≤35 amol/well (100 µl; 384 well)
Mono - top	≤50 amol/well (100 µl; 384 well)
Filter - bottom	≤500 amol/well (200 µl; 96 well)
Fusion - bottom	≤700 amol/well (200 µl; 96 well)
Mono - bottom	≤800 amol/well (200 µl; 96 well)

FP (fluorescence polarization)[2]

Spectral range	300–850 nm
Precision - Filter	≤1.5 mP
Precision - Fusion	≤2.5 mP
Precision - Mono	≤3.0 mP

TRF (time-resolved fluorescence)[3]

Limit of detection - Filter	≤4.0 amol/well (100 µl; 384-well)
Limit of detection - Fusion	≤6.5 amol/well (100 µl; 384-well)
Limit of detection - Mono	≤10 amol/well (100 µl; 384-well)

Fastest read time

96-well plate (FI)	≤13 sec
384-well plate (FI)	≤30 sec

Absorbance (enhanced or standard)

Light source	Dedicated xenon flash lamp
Spectral range	200–1,000 nm
	OD range 0–4 OD
Scan speed (200–1,000 nm)	≤5 sec
Wavelength accuracy	<0.3 nm
Wavelength reproducibility	≤0.3 nm
Wavelength ratio accuracy (260/230)	<0.08
Wavelength ratio accuracy (260/280)	<0.07
Precision @ 260 nm	<0.2 %
Accuracy @ 260 nm	<0.5 %
Limit of detection (nucleic acids)	<1 ng/µl

Plate formats for all read modes – enhanced

1-1,536 wells; NanoQuant Plate; cuvettes; RoboFlask®

Plate formats for all read modes – standard

1-384 wells; NanoQuant Plate; cuvettes; RoboFlask

Luminescence (enhanced or standard)

Spectral range	370–700 nm
Limit of detection – Glow[4]	≤225 amol/well (25 µl; 384-well SV)
Limit of detection – Flash[5]	≤12 amol/well (55 µl; 384-well)
Dynamic range	>9 orders of magnitude
Multi-color luminescence	38 spectral filters;
	OD1, OD2, OD3 attenuation filters

AlphaScreen (enhanced or standard)

Limit of detection	<100 amol/well bio-LCK-P[6]; 20 µl
	<2.5 ng/ml Omnibeads[7]; 20 µl
Uniformity	≤3.0 %
Z´value	>0.9
Fastest read times[8]	≤2 min (384-well plate)
	≤1 min (96-well plate)

Gas Control Module (GCM™)

Adjustable concentration range – CO_2	0.04–10 % (vol.)
Adjustable concentration range – O_2	0.1–21 % (vol.)
Concentration accuracy – CO_2	<1 % (vol.)
Concentration accuracy – O_2	<0.5 % (vol.)

Reagent injectors

Syringe sizes	0.5 ml; 1 ml; 2.5 ml
Pump speed	100–300 µl/sec
Injection volume	5–2,500 µl; step size: 1 µl
Dead volume	≤100 µl
Injection accuracy and precision	≤0.5 % at 450 µl

Temperature control	Ambient +3 °C up to 42 °C
Uniformity	<0.5 °C

Shaking

Linear, orbital, double-orbital;
variable amplitudes and frequencies

+Specifications are subject to change. Performance values represent the average observed factory tested values.

*Fusion Optics: a combination of filter and monochromator on the excitation and emission sides

1) Detection limit for fluorescein

2) FP detection limit @ 1 nM fluorescein

3) Detection limit for europium

4) Detection limit for ATP (144-041 ATP detection kit SL, BioThema)

5) Detection limit for ATP (ENLITEN® Kit)

6) (PE# 6760620; P-Tyr-100 assay kit)

7) (PE# 6760626D; Omnibeads)

8) Including temp. correction

Spark Cyto multimode reader is For Research Use Only. Not for use in diagnostic procedures.

For product specifications refer to operators manual.

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