CLAIMS

1. An expression vector for the heterologous expression of a nucleic acid sequence of interest in mammalian cells, the vector comprising a first chimeric promoter regulatory sequence being operably linked to a first nucleic acid sequence to be expressed, wherein the chimeric promoter regulatory sequence comprises:
   (i) a promoter sequence being selected from the murine cytomegalovirus IE1 promoter consisting of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4 or the human cytomegalovirus IE1 promoter consisting of SEQ ID NO: 5 and being operably linked to the transcriptional start site of the nucleic acid sequence to be expressed; and
   (ii) an enhancer sequence from the human and/or the simian cytomegalovirus IE1 region, the enhancer sequence being located 5' of and operably linked to the murine or the human promoter sequence, and
   wherein the chimeric promoter regulatory sequence comprises sequence elements from at least two of the group consisting of murine cytomegalovirus, human cytomegalovirus and simian cytomegalovirus.

2. The expression vector of claim 1, wherein the enhancer sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 6 from the simian cytomegalovirus IE1 region.

3. The expression vector of claim 1 or 2, wherein the chimeric promoter regulatory sequence comprises a nucleotide sequence being selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 7, SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 9, SEQ ID NO: 10, SEQ ID NO: 11, SEQ ID NO: 12, and SEQ ID NO: 13.

4. The expression vector of any one of claims 1 to 3, further comprising a second chimeric promoter regulatory sequence being operably linked to a second nucleic acid sequence to be expressed, wherein the second chimeric promoter regulatory sequence is identical to the first chimeric promoter regulatory sequence.

5. The expression vector of any one of claims 1 to 4, further comprising a second chimeric promoter regulatory sequence being operably linked to a second nucleic acid sequence to be expressed, wherein the second chimeric promoter regulatory sequence is different from the first chimeric promoter regulatory sequence.

6. The expression vector of claim 4 or 5, wherein the first and second nucleic acid sequences to be expressed encode different polypeptides.

7. The expression vector of claim 6, wherein the different polypeptides represent subunits of a dimeric or multimeric protein.

8. The expression vector of claim 7, wherein dimeric or multimeric protein is an antibody molecule.

9. A mammalian host cell transfected with an expression vector as defined in any one of claims 1 to 8.

10. The mammalian host cell of claim 9, wherein the host cell is a CHO cell.

11. A method for heterologous expression of a nucleic acid sequence of interest in a mammalian host cell, comprising:
    (i) transfecting the mammalian host cell with an expression vector as defined in any one of claims 1 to 8; and
    (ii) culturing the transfected mammalian host cell under conditions allowing the expression of the nucleic acid sequence of interest.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the transfection is stable transfection.

13. Use of an expression vector as defined in any one of claims 1 to 8 for the heterologous expression of a nucleic acid sequence of interest in a mammalian host cell.

CLAIMS

1. An expression vector for the heterologous expression of a nucleic acid sequence of interest in mammalian cells, the vector comprising a first chimeric promoter regulatory sequence being operably linked to a first nucleic acid sequence to be expressed, wherein the chimeric promoter regulatory sequence comprises:

   (i) a promoter sequence being selected from the murine cytomegalovirus IE1 promoter consisting of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4 or the human cytomegalovirus IE1 promoter consisting of SEQ ID NO: 5 and being operably linked to the transcriptional start site of the nucleic acid sequence to be expressed; and

   (ii) an enhancer sequence from the human and/or the simian cytomegalovirus IE1 region, the enhancer sequence being located 5' of and operably linked to the murine or the human promoter sequence, and

   wherein the chimeric promoter regulatory sequence comprises sequence elements from at least two of the group consisting of murine cytomegalovirus, human cytomegalovirus and simian cytomegalovirus.

2. The expression vector of claim 1, wherein the enhancer sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 6 from the simian cytomegalovirus IE1 region.

3. The expression vector of claim 1 or 2, wherein the chimeric promoter regulatory sequence comprises a nucleotide sequence being selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 8, SEQ ID NO: 9, SEQ ID NO: 10, SEQ ID NO: 11, SEQ ID NO: 12, and SEQ ID NO: 13.

4. The expression vector of any one of claims 1 to 3, further comprising a second chimeric promoter regulatory sequence being operably linked to a second nucleic acid sequence to be expressed, wherein the second chimeric promoter regulatory sequence is identical to the first chimeric promoter regulatory sequence.

5. The expression vector of any one of claims 1 to 4, further comprising a second chimeric promoter regulatory sequence being operably linked to a second nucleic acid sequence to be expressed, wherein the second chimeric promoter regulatory sequence is different from the first chimeric promoter regulatory sequence.

6. The expression vector of claim 4 or 5, wherein the first and second nucleic acid sequences to be expressed encode different polypeptides.

7. The expression vector of claim 6, wherein the different polypeptides represent subunits of a dimeric or multimeric protein.

8. The expression vector of claim 7, wherein dimeric or multimeric protein is an antibody molecule.

9. A mammalian host cell transfected with an expression vector as defined in any one of claims 1 to 8.

10. The mammalian host cell of claim 9, wherein the host cell is a CHO cell.

11. An *in vitro* method for heterologous expression of a nucleic acid sequence of interest in a mammalian host cell, comprising:
    (i) transfecting the mammalian host cell with an expression vector as defined in any one of claims 1 to 8; and
    (ii) culturing the transfected mammalian host cell under conditions allowing the expression of the nucleic acid sequence of interest.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the transfection is stable transfection.

13. Use of an expression vector as defined in any one of claims 1 to 8 for the heterologous *in vitro* expression of a nucleic acid sequence of interest in a mammalian host cell.