Reviewer C:

Please use spell checker again because I have found more than 10 typos.

We used a spelling checker to correct the typos, many thanks for spotting this.

Specific comments

Lines 173, 185 and 252…” is shown” should be rephrased because it starts to irritate after 10 minutes reading of the manuscript. Style error, but still an error.

We are not entirely sure as to why the reviewer was irritated. We checked this issue with a native speaker, who had no objections to the style in lines 173, 185 and 252. We therefore respectfully decline to rephrase them.

Line 154 “The digest was fractionated and the phosphopeptide enrichment was perfomed on PHOS-SelectTM IMAC beads (Sigma).”

What does it mean “the digest is fractionated”? What technique, who fractionated the digest man/woman or machine, what was the fraction, what you do with fractions (e.g. have you collected each fraction and have you done phosphopeptide enrichment, or what?). What was the volume of the fraction? I do not understand what you have been doing, I could just guess that.

Line 156 “The phosphorylation of peptides was analyzed on a LTQ-FT mass spectrometer (Thermo Electron).”

Just like that…Conditions are inadequate. ESI/MALDI/ETD/ETC/APCI? I suppose ESI but where is the statement? Liquid chromatography, capillary electrophoresis, gel digest analysis by direct infusion, flow injection analysis???

This entire section was rephrased to provide more detailed information, which should now be sufficient to repeat the experiment. The protocol is also referenced to a published article.

Lines 231-235 “The MS/MS spectrum of the precursor ion at m/z 560.225108, corresponding to the B. subtilis SsbA peptide TFTNQSGER with one phosphorylated residue. The fragmentation pattern is consistent with the residue threonine 38 being phosphorylated. (B) The MS/MS spectrum of the precursor ion at the m/z ratio of 520.24, corresponding to the non-phosphorylated peptide.”

Number of decimal places is not uniform, theoretical mass of the peptide or mass error is not given, m/z should be in italic and hereinafter and hereinbefore.

This has been corrected.

Lines 263-265 “This in vitro phosphorylation assay revealed that YabT is the most efficient of the three kinases in phosphorylating SsbA (Figure 3).”

The in vitro phosphorylation assay is not self-explanatory. Please do some additional work to explain how you have derived this conclusion (some densitometry numbers would be useful as well if you have them).

We rephrased this section to more clearly explain the phosphorylation assay, and we also provided the relative band intensities measured by densitometry, as requested.