Supplementary information

Dye-doped silica nanoparticle probes for fluorescence lifetime imaging of reductive environment in living cells
Luca Petrizza, Mayeul Collot, Ludovic Richert, Yves Mely, Luca Prodi, Andrey S. Klymchenko

1. Synthesis and characterization
1.1. Synthesis and characterization of BHQ derivatives

1: in a flamed 250 mL round bottom flask dried with a heat gun under a flow of Argon, to a solution of N-(2-Hydroxyethyl)aniline (5 g, 36.45 mmol) in Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) (40 mL) was added Propargyl bromide (solution 80 wt. % in toluene) (4.8 mL, 43.10 mmol) and Sodium bicarbonate (6.13 g, 73 mmol) and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 15 h. The reaction mixture was then diluted with H2O (40 mL) and extracted four times with Ethyl acetate (EtOAc). The combined organic phases were washed two times with H2O and one time with Brine, dried over Sodium sulfate and concentrated in vacuo to give the title compound 1 as a yellow-brown oil (6.219 g, yield 98 %); Rf = 0.61 (SiO2, EtOAc:Heptane (Hept) = 60/40).

- **Chemical formula:** C_{11}H_{13}NO;
- **Molecular Weight:** 175.2;
- **$^1$H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C):** δ = 7.31 (2H, t, J = 8.2 Hz, ar. CH), 6.95 (2H, d, J = 7.8 Hz, ar. CH), 6.87 (1H, t, J = 7.3 Hz, ar. CH), 4.11 (2H, d, J = 2.4 Hz, -NCH$_2$-), 3.86 (2H, t, J = 5.1 Hz, -NCH$_2$CH$_3$), 3.59 (2H, t, J = 5.5 Hz, -CH$_2$CH$_2$OH), 2.28 (1H, t, J = 2.4 Hz, -CH$_2$OH);
- **$^{13}$C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C):** δ = 148.3, 129.4, 119.0, 114.8, 80.1, 72.6, 60.2, 54.0, 41.1;
- **ESI-MS m/z calculated for C_{11}H_{13}NO$^+$ is 175.1; obs.: 176.1 (M+H$^+$).**

BHQ-OH: in a flamed 1 L round bottom flask dried with a heat gun under a flow of Argon, the compound 1 (5.077 g, 29 mmol) was solubilized with 100 mL of 1,4-Dioxane (Diox). Fast Black K salt (30% dye content, 20.4 g, 14.64 mmol) was solubilized in a mixture 1,4-Diox/H$_2$O (7/3, 400 mL) and added to the previous solution, and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 72 h. Diox was then removed in vacuo; a black solid was attached to the flask, and H$_2$O was discarded. The residue was purified by silica gel chromatography eluting with EtOAc/Hept (9:1-5:5) to give the compound BHQ-OH as a purple solid (1.417 g, yield 10 %); Rf = 0.37 (SiO2, EtOAc:Hept = 60/40).

- **Chemical formula:** C$_{25}$H$_{12}$N$_6$O$_5$;
- **Molecular Weight:** 488.5;
- **$^1$H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C):** δ = 8.39 (2H, d, J = 8.9 Hz, ar. CH), 8.06 (2H, d, J = 8.8 Hz, ar. CH), 7.99 (2H, d, J = 8.9 Hz, ar. CH), 7.51 (1H, s, ar. CH), 7.48 (1H, s, ar. CH), 6.99 (2H, d, J = 9.5 Hz, ar. CH), 4.25 (2H, s, -NCH$_2$C-), 4.10 (3H, s, -OCH$_3$), 4.06 (3H, s, -OCH$_3$), 3.95 (2H, t, J = 5.1 Hz, -NCH$_2$CH$_2$OH), 3.74 (2H, t, J = 5.2 Hz, -CH$_2$CH$_2$OH), 2.34 (1H, s, -CH$_2$OH);
- **$^{13}$C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C):** δ = 156.6, 153.7, 151.3, 151.0, 148.6, 146.6, 145.7, 142.6, 126.0, 124.9, 123.8, 113.1, 101.3, 100.3, 79.5, 73.0, 60.6, 57.0, 56.9, 53.9, 41.3;
- **ESI-MS m/z calculated for C$_{25}$H$_{12}$N$_6$O$_5$+ is 488.2; obs.: 489.2 (M+H$^+$).**
BHQ-SO$_3$: in a flamed 50 mL round bottom flask dried with a heat gun under a flow of Argon, to a solution of BHQ-OH (0.2 g, 0.41 mmol) in Dimethylformamide (DMF, 15 mL) was added Sulfur trioxide triethylamine complex (0.8 g, 4.4 mmol) and the reaction mixture was heated at 55°C for 18 h. After cooling down to room temperature, the reaction mixture was then concentrated in vacuo and the residue was purified by silica gel chromatography eluting with Dichloromethane (DCM)/Methanol (MeOH) (9:1-8:2) to give the compound BHQ-SO$_3$ as a purple solid (0.202 g, yield 87%); $R_f = 0.56$ (SiO$_2$, DCM:MeOH = 80/20).

- Chemical formula: C$_{25}$H$_{23}$N$_2$O$_4$S;
- Molecular Weight: 567.5;
- $^1$H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C): δ = 8.38 (2H, d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, ar. CH), 8.05 (2H, d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, ar. CH), 7.95 (2H, d, $J = 9.1$ Hz, ar. CH), 7.51 (1H, s, ar. CH), 7.46 (1H, s, ar. CH), 6.96 (2H, d, $J = 9.2$ Hz, ar. CH); 4.33 (2H, t, $J = 6.2$ Hz, -CH$_2$CH$_2$OS-), 4.25 (2H, d, $J = 2.0$ Hz, -NCH$_2$C-), 4.10 (3H, s, -OCH$_3$), 4.05 (3H, s, -OCH$_3$), 3.87 (2H, t, $J = 6.0$ Hz, -NCH$_2$CH$_2$OS-), 2.26 (1H, t, $J = 2.2$ Hz -CH$_2$);
- $^{13}$C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C): δ = 156.4, 153.5, 151.0, 148.4, 146.5, 145.1, 142.3, 132.3, 125.8, 124.7, 123.6, 112.7, 101.1, 100.2, 72.4, 64.8, 56.8, 50.5, 46.1;
- ESI-MS m/z calculated for C$_{25}$H$_{23}$N$_2$O$_4$S$^+$ is 567.1; obs.: 567.1.

2: in a flamed 25 mL round bottom flask dried with a heat gun under a flow of Argon, to a solution of octaethylene glycol monomethyl ether (0.5 g, 1.3 mmol) in Chloroform (CHCl$_3$, 5 mL) was added Pyridine (Pyr, 0.105 mL, 1.3 mmol) and Thionyl chloride (0.142 mL, 1.95 mmol) and the reaction mixture was heated at 60°C for 1 h. After cooling down to room temperature, the reaction mixture was then concentrated in vacuo to give Cl-PEG$_8$-OMe as a yellow oil (0.445 g, yield 85%) which was used for the next step without further purification.

- Chemical formula: C$_{35}$H$_{33}$ClO$_6$;
- Molecular Weight: 402.9;
- $^1$H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C): δ = 3.76 (2H, t, $J = 5.8$ Hz, -CH$_2$Cl), 3.69-3.62 (28H, m, -OCH$_2$CH$_2$O-), 3.56-3.54 (2H, m, -CH$_2$CH$_2$Cl), 3.38 (3H, s, -OCH$_3$);
- $^{13}$C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C): δ = 71.7, 71.1, 70.4, 70.3, 70.2, 58.8, 42.6;
- ESI-MS m/z calculated for C$_{35}$H$_{33}$ClO$_6$ is 402.2; obs.: 420.2 (M+NH$_4^+$).

In a flamed 25 mL round bottom flask dried with a heat gun under a flow of Argon, to a solution of Cl-PEG$_8$-OMe (0.969 g, 2.4 mmol) in DMF (9.5 mL) was added sodium azide (0.313 g, 4.8 mmol) and the reaction mixture was heated at 80°C for 18 h. After cooling down to room temperature, the reaction mixture was then concentrated in vacuo and the obtained residue was redispersed with 5 mL of H$_2$O and extracted four times with DCM. The combined organic phases were dried over Sodium sulfate and concentrated in vacuo to give the compound 2 as a yellow oil (0.908 g, yield 93%); $R_f = 0.51$ (SiO$_2$, DCM:MeOH = 95/5).

- Chemical formula: C$_{17}$H$_{35}$N$_3$O$_5$;
- Molecular Weight: 409.5;
- $^1$H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C): δ = 3.66-3.60 (28H, m, -OCH$_2$CH$_2$O-), 3.53-3.51 (2H, m, -CH$_2$CH$_2$N$_3$), 3.37-3.36 (2H, m, -CH$_2$N$_3$), 3.35 (3H, s, -OCH$_3$);
- $^{13}$C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C): δ = 71.2, 70.6, 69.9, 69.8, 69.7, 69.3, 58.2, 49.9, 42.1;
- ESI-MS m/z calculated for C$_{17}$H$_{35}$N$_3$O$_5$ is 409.2; obs.: 427.3 (M+NH$_4^+$).
Copper(II) sulfate pentahydrate (0.181 g, 0.73 mmol) and the compound 2 (0.714 g, 1.74 mmol) were solubilized with 65 mL of Diox. Copper(II) sulfate pentahydrate (0.181 g, 0.73 mmol) and Sodium ascorbate (0.201 mg, 1.02 mmol) were solubilized with 3 mL of H₂O and added to the previous solution, and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 30 min. The reaction mixture was then concentrated in vacuo and the residue was purified by silica gel chromatography eluting with DCM/MeOH (9:1) to give the compound 3 as a purple solid (0.975 g, yield 75%); Rf = 0.24 (SiO₂, DCM:MeOH = 90/10).

- Chemical formula: C₄₉H₅₉N₉O₁₃;
- Molecular Weight: 898.0;
- H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 25°C): δ = 8.36 (2H, d, J = 9.0 Hz, ar. CH), 8.03 (2H, d, J = 9.1 Hz, ar. CH), 7.89 (2H, d, J = 9.0 Hz, ar. CH) - 7.87 (1H, s, -NCH) overlapped, 7.47 (1H, s, ar. CH), 7.43 (1H, s, ar. CH) 6.92 (2H, d, J = 7.4 Hz, ar. CH), 4.82 (2H, s, -NCH₂C-), 4.52 (2H, t, J = 5.0 Hz, -NCH₂CH₂O-), 4.06 (3H, s, -OCH₃), 4.02 (3H, s, -OCH₃), 3.95 (2H, t, J = 4.6 Hz, -NCH₂CH₂OH), 3.83 (2H, t, J = 4.8 Hz, -CH₂CH₂OH), 3.64-3.60 (30H, m, -OCH₂CH₂O-), 3.35 (3H, s, -CH₂OCH₃);
- C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 25°C): δ = 156.6, 153.7, 151.2, 151.1, 148.6, 146.8, 145.1, 145.0, 142.4, 126.0, 124.9, 123.7, 123.6, 121.4, 101.2, 100.3, 72.1, 71.5, 70.8, 70.7, 69.5, 60.7, 59.2, 57.0, 55.8, 50.7, 47.7, 42.9;
- ESI-MS m/z calculated for C₄₉H₅₉N₉O₁₃⁺ is 897.4; obs.: 898.4 (M+H⁺).

4: in a flamed 100 mL round bottom flask dried with a heat gun under a flow of Argon, 3 (0.975 g, 1.09 mmol), Pyr (0.264 mL, 3.27 mmol) and 4-Nitrophenyl chloroformate (0.659 g, 3.27 mmol) were solubilized with 36 mL of DCM and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 18 h. The reaction mixture was then concentrated in vacuo and the residue was purified by silica gel chromatography eluting with EtOAc/Acetone (AcO) (1:1) to give the compound 4 as a purple oil (0.819 g, yield 71%); Rf = 0.22 (SiO₂, EtOAc:AcO = 50/50).

- Chemical formula: C₄₈H₆₂N₈O₁₇;
- Molecular Weight: 1063.1;
- H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 25°C): δ = 8.39 (2H, d, J = 9.0 Hz, ar. CH), 8.27 (2H, d, J = 9.1 Hz, ar. CH), 8.06 (2H, d, J = 8.9 Hz, ar. CH), 7.97 (2H, d, J = 9.0 Hz, ar. CH), 7.72 (1H, s, -NCH), 7.51 (1H, s, ar. CH), 7.47 (1H, s, ar. CH), 7.33 (2H, d, J = 9.2 Hz, ar. CH), 6.98 (2H, d, J = 9.1 Hz, ar. CH), 4.85 (2H, s, -NCH₂C(NNN)-), 4.58 (2H, t, J = 5.7 Hz, -COOCH₂CH₂N₂), 4.54 (2H, t, J = 4.9 Hz, -NCH₂CH₂O-), 4.10 (3H, s, -OCH₃), 4.06 (3H, s, -OCH₃), 4.00 (2H, t, J = 5.2 Hz, -NNNCH₂CH₂O-), 3.86 (2H, t, 5.2 Hz, -NNNCH₂CH₂O-)) 3.65-3.53 (28H, m, -OCH₂CH₂O-), 3.37 (3H, s, -CH₂OCH₃);
- C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 25°C): δ = 158.0, 156.1, 153.4, 150.9, 151.0, 148.4, 148.1, 146.3, 145.7, 145.5, 144.4, 142.9, 126.2, 125.2, 125.1, 124.4, 123.1, 123.0, 122.3, 121.9, 110.4, 101.8, 101.2, 71.4, 70.6, 69.6, 66.3, 59.1, 56.8, 50.7, 49.4, 48.8, 42.9;
- ESI-MS m/z calculated for C₄₈H₆₂N₈O₁₇⁺ is 1062.4; obs.: 1063.4 (M+H⁺).
**BHQ-PEG**: in a flamed 25 mL round bottom flask dried with a heat gun under a flow of Argon, to a solution of 4 (0.1 g, 0.094 mmol) in DMF (5 mL) was added N,N-Diisopropylethylamine (DIEA, 0.065 mL, 0.376 mmol) and Propargylamine (0.024 mL, 0.376 mmol) and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 18 h. The reaction mixture was then diluted with H₂O (5 mL) and extracted three times with DCM. The combined organic phases were washed three times with a saturated solution of Sodium bicarbonate, dried over Sodium sulfate and concentrated in vacuo to give the compound BHQ-PEG as a purple oil (0.074 g, yield 81 %); Rᵣ = 0.49 (SiO₂, EtOAc:AcO = 50/50).

- **Chemical formula**: C₄₆H₆₂N₁₀O₁₄;
- **Molecular Weight**: 979.1;
- **¹H-NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl₃, 25°C): δ = 8.39 (2H, d, J = 9.0 Hz, ar. CH), 7.93 (2H, d, J = 9.2 Hz, ar. CH), 7.62 (1H, s, -NCH), 7.51 (1H, s, ar. CH), 7.45 (1H, s, ar. CH), 6.91 (2H, d, J = 9.1 Hz, ar. CH), 5.29 (1H, s, -OCOONH⁻), 4.81 (2H, s, -NCH₂CNNN⁻), 4.52 (2H, t, J = 4.8 Hz, -COOCH₂CH₂N), 4.36 (2H, t, J = 5.2 Hz, -NCH₂CH₂O⁻), 4.10 (3H, s, -OCH₃), 4.05 (3H, s, -OCH₃), 3.98-3.95 (2H, m, -NHCH₂C), 3.86 (2H, t, J = 4.8 Hz, -NNNCH₂CH₂O⁻), 3.65-3.53 (30H, m, -OCH₂CH₂O⁻) + (1H, s, CCH) overlapped, 3.38 (3H, s, -CH₂OCH₃);
- **¹³C-NMR** (100 MHz, CDCl₃, 25°C): δ = 156.4, 155.8, 153.5, 151.1, 150.9, 148.4, 146.4, 145.1, 144.5, 142.3, 126.0, 124.7, 123.5, 123.1, 112.2, 101.0, 100.1, 79.8, 71.9, 71.7, 71.4, 70.7, 70.4, 69.4, 62.4, 59.0, 56.8, 50.3, 47.3, 42.7, 29.7;
- **ESI-MS** m/z calculated for C₄₆H₆₂N₁₀O₁₄⁺ is 978.4; obs.: 979.4 (M+H⁺).

1.2. Synthesis and characterization of F127 derivatives

1.2.1. Pluronic-F127 derivatives

**Scheme S1.** Two different approaches for the preparation of functionalised SiNPs by CuAAC click chemistry. i. MsCl, NEt₃, DCM ; ii. NaN₃, CH₃CN.
Dimesyl derivative of Pluronic F127 (DMF127) was synthesized adapting a reported procedure. In a flamed 100 mL round bottom flask dried with a heat gun under a flow of Argon, Pluronic F127 (6.3 g, 0.5 mmol) was solubilized in DCM (25 mL) and the reaction was cooled to 0°C. Next, Triethylamine (TEA, 140 µL, 1 mmol) and methanesulfonfonyl chloride (78 µL, 1 mmol) were added. The reaction mixture was stirred at 0°C for 3 h and then at room temperature for 15 h. The reaction mixture was concentrated in vacuo, then the residue was redispersed with H2O and the purification was carried out by means of dialysis against H2O (72 h) to give DMF127 as a white solid (5.01 g, yield 80%).

- **1H-NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl3, 25°C): δ = 4.40-4.38 (4H, m, -SOCH2CH2-), 3.84-3.81 (4H, m, -SOCH2CH2-), 3.65-3.61 (-OCH2CH2O-), 3.59-3.51 (m, -OCH2CH-) + 3.43-3.38 (m, -CHCH3) ~1000H, 3.09 (6H, s, CH3SOO-), 1.16-1.13 (~195H, m, -CHCH3);

- **13C-NMR** (100 MHz, CDCl3, 25°C): δ = 75.0, 74.9, 74.8, 72.9, 72.6, 72.3, 70.1, 68.9, 68.6, 45.5, 17.1, 16.9.

Diazide derivative of Pluronic F127 (DAF127) was synthesized adapting a reported procedure. In a flamed 100 mL round bottom flask dried with a heat gun under a flow of Argon, DMF127 (4.8 g, 0.38 mmol) and Sodium azide (74 mg, 1.1 mmol) were solubilized in Acetonitrile (MeCN, 24 mL) and the reaction was heated under reflux for 48h. Next, the solvent was removed under reduced pressure with a rotary evaporator and the obtained solid was redispersed with 5% aqueous solution of Sodium bicarbonate, then saturated with NaCl and extracted five times with DCM. The combined organic phases were dried over Sodium sulfate, concentrated with the rotary evaporator and desiccated in vacuo, affording a white solid substance. The residue was re-dissolved with H2O and purification was carried out by means of dialysis against H2O (72 h) to give DAF127 as a white solid (3.28 g, yield 69%).

- **1H-NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl3, 25°C): δ = 3.83-3.81 (4H, m, -N2CH2CH2OCH2-) + 3.58-3.50 (m, -OCH2CH-) + 3.42-3.38 (m, -CHCH3 + -CHN2) ~1000H, 1.15-1.13 (~195H, m, -CHCH3);

- **13C-NMR** (100 MHz, CDCl3, 25°C): δ = 75.0, 74.8, 74.6, 72.9, 72.8, 72.5, 70.1, 50.1, 17.0, 16.9.

General procedure for the synthesis of PI-127-BHQs: in a flamed 20 mL round bottom, diazido pluronic F-127 DAF127 (1 eq., 0.012 mmol) and BHQ (-OH, -SO2 or -PEG, 4 eq.) were solubilized with 3 mL of Diox. Copper(II) sulfate pentahydrate (5 eq.) and Sodium ascorbate (7 eq.) were solubilized with 1 mL of H2O and added to the previous solution, and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 8 h. The reaction mixture was concentrated in vacuo, then the residue was purified by means means of dialysis against H2O (24 h) and Size-exclusion chromatography (Sephadex G-50) eluting with H2O to obtain the desired compound.

PI-127-BHQ-OH (yield 45%).

- **1H-NMR** (400 MHz, CDCl3, 25°C): δ = 8.42-8.37 (4H, m, ar. CH), 8.10-8.04 (4H, m, ar. CH), 7.90-7.82 (4H, m, ar. CH), 7.53-7.43 (4H, m, ar. CH) + (2H, s, -NCH-) overlapped, 6.86-6.77 (4H, m, ar. CH), 4.35-4.31 (4H, m, -NCCH3N-), 4.09 (6H, s, -OCH2), 4.04 (6H, s, -OCH2), 3.83-3.81 (4H, m, -NCH2CH2OH) + (4H, m, -NCH2CH2OH) + (4H, m, -NNCH2CH2OCH2-) overlapped, 3.71-3.60 (m, -CH2OCH2-) + 3.58-3.50 (m, -OCH2CH-) + 3.42-3.39 (m, -CHCH3) ~1000H, 1.15-1.13 (~195H, m, -CHCH3);

- **13C-NMR** (100 MHz, CDCl3, 25°C): δ = 153.4, 150.9, 148.5, 148.4, 147.6, 125.8, 124.7, 123.5, 118.8, 113.9, 112.8, 101.0, 75.5, 75.3, 75.1, 73.3, 72.9, 70.5, 68.4, 61.5, 56.7, 53.4, 29.6, 17.0.
PI-127-BHQ-SO$_3$ (yield 52%).

- $^1$H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C): $\delta = 8.35$ (4H, d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, ar. CH), 8.07 (2H, s, -NCH$_2$-), 8.03 (4H, d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, ar. CH), 7.84 (4H, d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, ar. CH), 7.47 (2H, s, ar. CH), 7.41 (2H, s, ar. CH), 6.90 (4H, d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, ar. CH), 4.50-4.47 (4H, m, -NCH$_2$-), 4.07 (6H, s, -OCH$_3$), 4.01 (6H, s, -OCH$_3$), 3.81-3.79 (4H, m, -NCH$_2$CH$_2$OS-) + (4H, m, -NCH$_2$CH$_2$OS-) + (4H, m, -NNNCH$_2$CH$_2$OCH$_2$-) overlapped, 3.67-3.58 (m, -CH$_2$OCH$_2$-) + 3.56-3.48 (m, -OCH$_3$CH$_2$-) + 3.41-3.36 (m, -CHCH$_3$) + 3.36 (8H, m, -OCNHCH$_2$-) ~1000H, 1.13-1.11 (~195H, m, -CHCH$_3$);
- $^{13}$C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C): $\delta = 156.9, 155.3, 151.1, 147.3, 144.9, 128.1, 125.8, 124.7, 123.5, 122.5, 113.8, 112.4, 100.1, 80.5, 75.5, 75.3, 75.1, 72.9, 72.8, 72.4, 70.5, 68.4, 61.5, 56.8, 17.4, 17.3.

PI-127-BHQ-PEG (yield 52%). Well resolved NMR spectra could not have been obtained. Despite this, the resulting SiNP gave good results with small size DLS ~25 nm and PDI ≤ 0.05.

1.2.2 Pluronic-F127-SS derivatives

![Scheme S2](image)

Scheme S2. Schematization of the synthesis of the Pluronic-F127-SS derivatives.

5 was synthesized following a reported procedure.$^2$

6 was synthesized following a reported procedure.$^2$

7 was synthesized adapting reported procedures.$^{3,4}$ Cystamine dihydrochloride was neutralized by 4 M NaOH and extracted three times with DCM to yield Cystamine. In a flamed 50 mL round bottom flask dried with a heat gun under a flow of Argon, to a solution of Cystamine (1.267 g, 8.3 mmol) in DCM (20 mL) was added 3-Azidopropyl 1H-imidazole-1-carboxylate (6) (1.350 g, 6.9 mmol) and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 24 h. The reaction mixture was concentrated in vacuo, and the residue was treated with NaH$_2$PO$_4$ (50 mL, 1.0 M) and extracted three times with Diethyl ether (Et$_2$O). The reaction mixture was then concentrated in vacuo to give the compound 7 as a yellow solid (0.412 g, yield 22%).

- **Chemical formula:** $C_{68}H_{117}N_{49}O_{59}S_{2}$;
- **Molecular Weight:** 279.4;
in vacuo, then the residue was redispersed with HCl 0.1 M and -
H
2
H
7
3
3
-
H
6
H
obtain the desired compound (mixture was stirred at room temperature for 8 h. The reaction mixture was concentrated
20 mL of MeCN and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 18 h. The reaction mixture was then concentrated
in vacuo, and purification was carried out by means of dialysis against water (72 h) to give the compound 8 as a white solid (5.85 g, yield 91 %).

\[ ^1H-NMR \text{ (400 MHz, CDCl}_3, 25^\circ C): \delta = 8.25 \text{ (2H, d, J = 9.1 Hz, ar. CH), 8.06 \text{ (2H, d, J = 9.1 Hz, ar. CH),}\n7.36 \text{ (2H, d, J = 9.2 Hz, ar. CH), 6.88 \text{ (2H, d, J = 9.1 Hz, ar. CH), 4.42-3.49 \text{ (4H, m, -CH}_2\text{COO-)}, 3.79-3.77 \text{ (4H, m, -CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{COO), 3.63-3.59 \text{ (}-\text{OC}_2\text{H}_5\text{CH}_2\text{O}) + 3.57-3.49 \text{ (m, -OC}_2\text{H}_5\text{CH}_2\text{)}, 3.41-3.39 \text{ (m, -CHCH}_3\text{)} \sim 1000H, 1.12-1.09 \text{ (~195H, m, -CHCH}_3\text{);}}
\]

\[ ^13C-NMR \text{ (100 MHz, CDCl}_3, 25^\circ C): \delta = 155.3, 152.2, 145.1, 138.9, 126.0, 125.0, 121.6, 116.1, 75.3, 75.1, 74.9, 73.1, 72.6, 70.3, 68.4, 68.1, 17.2, 17.1.\]

9: in a flamed 100 mL round bottom flask dried with a heat gun under a flow of Argon, compound (8) (1.75 g, 0.135 mmol), DIEA (0.092 mL, 0.54 mmol) and compound (7) (0.151 g, 0.54 mmol) were solubilized with 20 mL of MeCN and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 18 h. The reaction mixture was concentrated in vacuo, then the residue was redispersed with H$_2$O and purification was carried out by means of dialysis against water (72 h) to give the compound 9 as a yellow solid (1.075 g, yield 61 %).

\[ ^1H-NMR \text{ (400 MHz, CDCl}_3, 25^\circ C): \delta = 4.27-4.13 \text{ (8H, m, -CH}_2\text{OOCNH-)}, 3.80 \text{ (4H, t, J = 4.3 Hz, -NHCOOCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{O-)}, 3.66-3.61 \text{ (m, -OC}_2\text{H}_5\text{CH}_2\text{O}) + 3.56-3.49 \text{ (m, -OC}_2\text{H}_5\text{CH}_2\text{)}, 3.40-3.37 \text{ (m, -CHCH}_3\text{)} + (8H, m, -OCNHCH}_2\text{-} \sim 1000H, 2.80 \text{ (8H, t, J = 6.0 Hz, -CH}_2\text{SSCH}_2\text{-}), 1.92-1.86 \text{ (4H, m, -CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{N}_2\text{)}, 1.13-1.11 \text{ (~195H, m, -CHCH}_3\text{).}}
\]

\[ ^13C-NMR \text{ (100 MHz, CDCl}_3, 25^\circ C): \delta = 156.3, 156.2, 75.4, 75.2, 75.0, 73.2, 72.8, 72.7, 70.4, 69.4, 68.5, 68.4, 61.7, 48.1, 39.7, 28.4, 17.3, 17.2.\]

**Scheme S3.** Schematization of the general procedure for Pluronic PI-127-SS-BHQ derivatives.

**General procedure:** in a flamed 20 mL round bottom flask, 9 (1 eq., 0.012 mmol) and BHQ (-OH, -SO$_3$ or -PEG, 4 eq.) were solubilized with 3 mL of Diox. Copper(II) sulfate pentahydrate (5 eq.) and Sodium ascorbate (7 eq.) were solubilized with 1 mL of H$_2$O and added to the previous solution, and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 8 h. The reaction mixture was concentrated in vacuo, then the residue was purified by means of size-exclusion chromatography (LH-20) eluting with DCM/MeOH (1:1) to obtain the desired compound (PI-127-SS-BHQ-OH, PI-127-SS-BHQ-SO$_3$ or PI-127-SS-BHQ-PEG).
PI-127-SS-BHQ-OH (yield: 68 %).

- $^1$H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C): $\delta = 8.36$ (4H, d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, ar. CH), 8.04 (4H, d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, ar. CH), 7.87 (4H, d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, ar. CH), 7.61 (2H, s, -CCH-), 7.48 (2H, s, ar. CH), 7.42 (2H, s, ar. CH), 6.82 (4H, d, $J = 9.0$ Hz, ar. CH), 4.81 (4H, s, -NCH$_2$C-), 4.43 (4H, t, $J = 6.3$ Hz, -NCH$_2$CH$_2$CH$_2$-), 4.22-4.18 (8H, m, -CH$_2$OOCNH-), 4.07 (6H, s, -OCH$_3$), 4.03 (6H, s, -OCH$_3$), 3.96-3.94 (4H, m, -NCH$_2$CH$_2$OH), 3.82-3.80 (4H, m, -NCH$_2$CH$_2$OH) + (4H, m, -NHCOOCH$_3$CH$_2$O-) overlapped, 3.64-3.62 (m, -CH$_2$OCH$_2$-) + 3.57-3.49 (m, -OCH$_2$CH-) + 3.41-3.39 (m, -CH$_2$) + 3.36 (8H, m, -OCNHCH$_2$-) ~1000H, 2.80 (8H, t, $J = 6.3$ Hz, -CH$_2$SSCH$_2$-), 2.17-2.16 (4H, m, -NCH$_2$CH$_2$CH$_2$O-), 1.14-1.12 (~195H, m, -CHCH$_3$).

PI-127-SS-BHQ-SO$_3$ (yield: 68 %).

- $^1$H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C): $\delta = 8.36$ (4H, d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, ar. CH), 8.04 (4H, d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, ar. CH), 7.86 (4H, d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, ar. CH), 7.53-7.43 (2H, s, -CCH-), 3.58-3.52 (2H, s, ar. CH) overlapped, 6.93 (4H, d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, ar. CH), 4.84 (4H, s, -NCH$_2$C-), 4.45-4.40 (4H, m, -CH$_2$OS-), 4.35-4.30 (4H, m, -NCH$_2$CH$_2$CH$_2$-), 4.24-4.19 (8H, m, -CH$_2$OOCNH-), 4.08 (6H, s, -OCH$_3$), 4.03 (6H, s, -OCH$_3$), 3.96-3.91 (4H, m, -NCH$_2$CH$_2$OS), 3.83-3.79 (4H, m, -NHCOOCH$_3$CH$_2$O-), 3.65-3.62 (m, -CH$_2$OCH$_2$-) + 3.58-3.49 (m, -OCH$_2$CH-) + 3.42-3.37 (m, -CHCH$_3$) + 3.37 (8H, m, -OCNHCH$_2$-) ~1000H, 2.89-2.79 (8H, m, -CH$_2$SSCH$_2$-), 2.18-2.16 (4H, m, -NCH$_2$CH$_2$CH$_2$O-), 1.15-1.12 (~195H, m, -CHCH$_3$).

- $^{13}$C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl$_3$, 25°C): $\delta = 156.4$, 156.3, 124.6, 123.4, 75.4, 75.2, 75.0, 73.2, 72.8, 72.7, 70.4, 68.4, 68.3, 63.5, 61.4, 56.7, 40.7, 40.0, 29.6, 17.3, 17.2.
13C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl3, 25°C): δ = 156.2, 153.3, 150.9, 150.7, 148.2, 146.2, 144.9, 142.1, 125.8, 124.5, 123.3, 112.0, 100.8, 100.0, 75.3, 75.1, 74.9, 74.0, 73.1, 72.8, 72.7, 72.6, 72.4, 71.7, 69.2, 68.4, 61.4, 58.8, 56.6, 50.1, 29.5, 17.2, 17.1.

1.3. Synthesis of silica nanoparticles

The preparation of core-shell silica-PEG dye doped nanoparticles was obtained adapting existing procedures.5,6 Pluronic F127 (68 mg, 5.4 µmol), modified F127 (32 mg, 2.5 µmol) and Rhodamine B-Si(OEt)37 (1.5 mg, 2 µmol) were solubilized with a small amount (~1.0 mL) of dichloromethane in a 8 mL glass scintillation vial. The solvent was then evaporated from the homogeneous solution under vacuum at room temperature. NaCl (68 mg, 1.2 mmol) was added to the solid residue and the mixture was solubilized at 25°C under magnetic stirring with 1560 µL of acetic acid 1.0 M. TEOS (180 µL, 0.8 mmol) was then added to the resulting aqueous homogeneous solution followed by TMSCl (10 µL, 0.08 mmol) after 180 min. The mixture was kept under stirring for 18 h at 25°C before dialysis treatments. The dialysis purification steps were carried out versus water on a precise amount of nanoparticles solution (1.5 mL) finally diluted to a total volume of 10.0 mL with water (Silica nanoparticles: 20 µM).
2. Spectroscopic studies

**Figure S1.** Emission spectra of the reductive SiNPs (200 nM) with various amount of BHQ (black: 0%, red: 16% and green: 32%) Excitation wavelength was 530 nm.
Figure S2. Fluorescence increase over 1 hour (monitored at 580 nm, excitation at 530 nm) of BHQ-OH SiNPs (20 nM) in the presence of 40 mM glutathion in phosphate buffer 20 mM pH 7.4. Excitation and emission wavelengths were 530 nm and 580 nm, respectively.

Figure S3. Fluorescence increase over 1 hour (monitored at 580 nm, excitation at 530 nm) of BHQ-PEG SiNPs (20 nM) in the presence of 20 mM TCEP in phosphate buffer 20 mM pH 7.4. Excitation and emission wavelengths were 530 nm and 580 nm, respectively.
Figure S4. Fluorescence increase over 1 hour (monitored at 580 nm, excitation at 530 nm) of SiNPs bearing 32% BHQ-OH (red), BHQ-SO3 (black) and BHQ-PEG (green) (20 nM) in the presence of 40 mM glutathion in phosphate buffer 20 mM pH 7.4. Excitation and emission wavelengths were 530 nm and 580 nm, respectively.

Figure S5. Fluorescence increase over 24 hours (monitored at 580 nm, excitation at 530 nm) of SiNPs bearing 32% reducible BHQ-SO3 (20 nM) in the presence of 40 mM glutathion in phosphate buffer 20 mM pH 7.4. Excitation and emission wavelengths were 530 nm and 580 nm, respectively.
Figure S6. Fluorescence increase over 1 hour (monitored at 580 nm, excitation at 530 nm) of SiNPs bearing 32% reducible-BHQ-SO$_3$ (20 nM) in absence of glutathion (green) and in the presence of 40 mM glutathion (red) in phosphate buffer 20 mM pH 7.4. Excitation and emission wavelengths were 530 nm and 580 nm, respectively.

Figure S7. Fluorescence intensity over 1 hour (monitored at 580 nm, excitation at 530 nm) of BHQ-free SiNPs (20 nM) in the presence of 40 mM glutathion in phosphate buffer 20 mM pH 7.4. Excitation and emission wavelengths were 530 nm and 580 nm, respectively.
Figure S8. Fluorescence increase over 1 hour (monitored at 580 nm, excitation at 530 nm) of SiNPs bearing 16% reducible-BHQ-OH (red) and 16% non reducible BHQ-OH (green) (20 nM) in the presence of 40 mM glutathion in phosphate buffer 20 mM pH 7.4. Excitation and emission wavelengths were 530 nm and 580 nm, respectively.

References