Polymerase synthesis of DNA labelled with benzylidene cyanoacetamidebased fluorescent molecular rotors: fluorescent light-up probes for DNA-binding proteins

Dmytro Dziuba,^{*a*} Radek Pohl^{*a*} and Michal Hocek^{*a,b**}

^a Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Gilead & IOCB Research Center, Flemingovo nam. 2, CZ-16610 Prague 6, Czech Republic. E-mail: hocek@uochb.cas.cz.

^b Department of Organic Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Charles University in Prague, Hlavova 8, CZ-12843 Prague 2, Czech Republic.

Contents

A. Additional figures and tables	S2
B. List of abbreviations	S5
C. Chemical synthesis and characterization of fluorescent nucleosides and dNTPs	S6
D. Enzymatic incorporation of modified dNTPs into DNA	S13
E. UV-Vis and Fluorescence measurements	S16
F. References	S18
G. Copies of the NMR spectra	S19
H. Copies of MALDI spectra	S28

A. Additional figures and tables



Scheme S1. Chemical synthesis of the fluorescent molecular rotors. Reagents and conditions: i) malononitrile, piperidine, MeOH [ref. S1] ii) 1: 40°C, 7h; 2: 70°C, overnight. iii) DIMCARB, I or II, CHCl₃, r.t. 30–60 min. iv) VI or VII, PdCl₂(PPh₃)₂, CuI, NEt₃, DMF, 80°C, 1h. v) 1: POCl₃, PO(OCH₃)₃, 0°C, 2–4 h; 2: (*n*-Bu₃NH)₂H₂P₂O₇, NBu₃, DMF, 0°C, 1 h; 3: 1M TEAB, 5 min; 4: HPLC; 5: Dowex 50WX8 (Na⁺ cycle).



Figure S1. (a) PEX with modified dNTPs $dC^{VJ}TP$ (4a) and $dC^{VDP}TP$ (4b) performed by KOD XL DNA polymerase; primer P3X and template T3X were used, assuming incorporation of four modified dC^X residues (see Table S1 for sequences); P: primer; positive control: four natural dNTPs (lane 1); negative control: dATP, dGTP, dTTP (lane 2); modified dNTP 4a: dATP, dGTP, dTTP and 4a (lane 3); modified dNTP 4b: dATP, dGTP, dTTP and 4b (lane 4).

(b–c) MALDI analysis of DNA obtained by semi-preparative PEX with **4a** and **4b** followed by magnetic separation; primer **P3X** and biotinylated template **T3Xb** were used (Table S1); products incorporating dC^{VJ} and dC^{VDP} moieties are shown in figures (b) and (c), respectively; peak of the btn-template partially released from the beads during denaturation step was also observed.



Figure S2. UV-vis spectra of purified PEX products obtained after incubation of a reaction mixture containing $dC^{VDP}TP$, dATP, dTTP, dGTP, primer P3X and template T3X either with (black line) or without (red line) KOD XL DNA polymerase at 60°C for 30 min. The mixtures were purified using QIAquick Nucleotide Removal Kit (QIAGEN). The absence of long-wavelength absorption in the spectrum of the sample incubated without polymerase indicated that $dC^{VDP}TP$ does not bind unspecifically to DNA.

Name	Length	Sequence (5'→3')ª	Used in	
		Primers		
P1X	25	GAA TTC GAT ATC AAG AGA CAT GCC T	PEX	
P2X	15	TCA AGA GAC ATG CCT	PEX	
P3X	15	CAT GGG CGG CAT GGG	PEX	
P1N	19	CCG ATC TAG TGA GTC CTC G	NEAR	
P1R	P1R 25 CAA GGA CAA AAT ACC TGT ATT CCT T		PCR	
P2R	20	GAC ATC ATG AGA GAC ATC GC	PCR	
		Templates		
T1X	50	TAC CTT ATC CAT AAT AGA CAT GTC TAG GCA TGT CTC TTG ATA TCG AAT TC	PEX	
T2Xb	30	btn ATA ATA GAC ATG TCT AGG CAT GTC TCT TGA	PEX	
T3X	T3X 31 CTA GCA TGA GCT CAG TCC CAT GCC CAT G		PEX	
T3Xb	T3Xb 31 btn CTA GCA TGA GCT CAG TCC CAT GCC GCC CAT G		PEX	
T1N	31	TCA ACT CAT GAC CGA GGA CTC ACT AGA TCG G	NEAR	
T2N	T2N 31 TCA GCG TAG ACT CGA GGA CTC ACT AGA TCG G		NEAR	
T1R	T1R98GAC ATC ATG AGA GAC ATC GCC TCT GGG CTA ATA GGA CTA CTT CTA ATC TGT AAG AGC AGA TCC CTG GAC AGG CAA GGA ATA CAG GTA TTT TGT CCT TG		PCR	
Others				
L10	10	CAG TGA CTA G	ssDNA ladder ^{s6}	
L20	L20 20 CAG TGA CTA GCT TAC GGA CT		ssDNA ladder ^{s6}	
L50 50 CAG TGC ATG ACT ATC GGA CCG TAT GAC TAG CTC AGG TAT CCA GTG ACT AG		ssDNA ladder ^{s6}		

Table S1.	Oligodeoxyn	ucleotides us	sed for enzyi	natic reactions
-----------	-------------	---------------	---------------	-----------------

Footnotes: a) btn = 5'-biotin.

Table S2. Single-strand	ed modified DNA obta	ained by PEX and NEAR
-------------------------	----------------------	-----------------------

#	Name	Sequence (5'→3') ª	Obt. ^b	Prim/ Tmpl ^c	M _{calcd} ^d	M _{found} e
1	ON1	TCA AGA GAC ATG CCT AGA C ^{VDP} AT GTC ^{VDP} TAT TAT	PEX	P2X / T2Xb	9691	9693
2	ON2	P - GTC ^{VJ} ATG AGT TGA	NEAR	P1N / T1N	4082	4083
3	ON3	P - GTC ^{VDP} ATG AGT TGA	NEAR	P1N / T1N	4030	4031
4	ON4	P - AGT C ^{VJ} TA C ^{VJ} GC ^{VJ} TGA	NEAR	P1N / T2N	4633	4634
5	ON5	P - AGT CVDP TA CVDP GCVDP TGA	NEAR	P1N / T2N	4477	4479

Footnotes. a) P = 5' phosphate group; ODNs containing dC^{VJ} and dC^{VDP} were obtained using triphosphates **4a** and **4b**, respectively. b) Enzymatic reactions used for the synthesis. c) Primer / Template used (Table S1 for sequences). d) Molecular mass calculated using ChemBioDraw13 and OligoCalc.^{S7} e) m/z of the major peak in the MALDI-TOF spectrum; for copies of MALDI-TOF spectra see pages S28–S30 of the Supporting information.

B. List of abbreviations

- BSA Bovine serum albumin DIMCARB - Dimethylammonium dimethylcarbamate DMSO - Dimethyl sulfoxide DTT - Dithiothreitol EA – Ethyl acetate EDTA - Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid EG – Ethylene glycol FMR - Fluorescent molecular rotor NEAR - Nicking enzyme amplification reaction ODNs - Oligodeoxynucleotides PAGE – Polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis PBS – Phosphate buffered saline PCR – Polymerase chain reaction PEX – Primer extension SSB - Single-strand Binding Protein from Escherichia coli TBE – Tris borate – EDTA buffer TEAA – Triethylammonium acetate buffer
 - TEAB Triethylammonium bicarbonate buffer
 - TLC Thin-layer chromatography

C. Chemical synthesis and characterization of fluorescent nucleosides and dNTPs

Materials and methods

Reagents and solvents were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich and AlfaAesar. 5-Iodo-2'-deoxycytidine (VIII) was purchased from Berry & Associates. 4-formyl julolidine (I) was synthesized according to the literature procedure.^{S2} Fluorescent molecular rotors **1a** and **1b** were synthesized as described by Theodorakis et al.^{S1} Column chromatography was performed by using silica gel (40–63 µm). Semipreparative purification of dC^xTPs was performed by HPLC (Waters modular HPLC system) on a column packed with 10 µm C18 reversed phase (Phenomenex, Luna C18 (2) 100 Å). NMR spectra were recorded on a 600 MHz (600.1 MHz for 1 H, 150.9 MHz for 13 C) or a 500 MHz (500.0 MHz for ¹H, 200.3 MHz for ³¹P, 125.7 MHz for ¹³C) spectrometer from sample solutions in CDCl₃, D₂O or DMSO-d6. Chemical shifts (in ppm, δ scale) were referenced as follows: CDCl₃ solutions, ¹H referenced to TMS ($\delta = 0$ ppm), ¹³C referenced to the solvent signal ($\delta = 77.0$ ppm); DMSO-d6 solutions, ¹H referenced to the residual solvent signal ($\delta = 2.50$ ppm), ¹³C referenced to the solvent signal ($\delta = 39.7$ ppm); D₂O solutions, referenced to 1.4-dioxane as an internal standard ($\delta(^{1}H) = 3.75$ ppm, $\delta(^{13}C) = 69.3$ ppm). ³¹P NMR spectra were referenced to the phosphate buffer signal ($\delta = 2.35$ ppm). Coupling constants (J) are given in Hz. NMR spectra of dNTPs were measured in phosphate buffer at pD = 7.1. Complete assignment of all NMR signals was achieved by using a combination of H,H-COSY, H,C-HSQC, and H,C-HMBC experiments. High resolution mass spectra were measured on a LTQ Orbitrap XL (Thermo Fisher Scientific) spectrometer using ESI ionization.

N-Propargyl-cyanoacetamide (V)



N-Propargyl-cyanoacetamide (**V**) was synthesized using the literature procedure^{S3} with minor modifications. A mixture of ethyl cyanoacetate **IV** (10 mL) and propargyl amine **III** (9 mL) was heated for 7 hours at 40 °C and then overnight at 70°C. The dark-red solid obtained was recrystallized from a minimal volume of methanol and washed with dichloromethane to give the product as palebrown solid (8.14g, 71%). M.p. (MeOH) 107 – 108 °C (lit.^{S3} 100 – 103 °C) ¹H NMR (500.0 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): 3.18 (t, 1H, ⁴J = 2.5, HC=C-); 3.67 (s, 2H, CH₂CN); 3.89 (dd, 2H, ³J = 5.4, ⁴J = 2.5,

CH₂N); 8.70 (bt, 1H, ${}^{3}J = 5.4$, NH). 13 C NMR (125.7 MHz, DMSO- d_6): 25.35 (CH₂CN); 28.66 (CH₂N); 73.81 (HC=C-); 80.51 (-C=CH); 116.17 (CN); 162.26 (CO). Anal. calcd for C₆H₆N₂O: C, 59.01; H, 4.95; N, 22.94. Found: C, 58.79; H, 4.88; N, 22.69.

General procedure for the Knoevenagel condensation of *N*-propargyl-cyanoacetamide (V) with *p*-dialkylaminobenzaldehydes catalyzed by DIMCARB ^{S4-S5}



Dimethylammonium dimethylcarbamate (DIMCARB, 3.85 mL, 30 mmol) was added to a solution of corresponding aldehyde (5 mmol) in chloroform (8 mL) and the mixture was stirred for 10 - 15 min at ambient temperature. Then, *N*-propargyl-cyanoacetamide **V** (732 mg, 6 mmol) was added at once. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 30 - 60 minutes until the complete consumption of the starting aldehyde as detected by TLC (hexane/EA, 7/3). Then, ~2N HCl (50 mL) was slowly added to the reaction flask and the resulting mixture was stirred until the evolution of gas stopped. Organic phase was separated; the water phase was extracted with dichloromethane ($3\times$); the combined organic layers were dried over MgSO₄, concentrated on a rotavap and purified by column chromatography eluted consequently with ethyl acetate in hexane ($20\rightarrow30\%$), then with hexane, and finally with acetone in dichloromethane ($0\rightarrow4\%$) to give the corresponding acetylene-containing molecular rotors **VI** or **VII**.

(E)-2-Cyano-N-(prop-2-yn-1-yl)-3-(julolidine-9-yl)acrylamide (VI)

Orange solid (1.29 g, 85%) was obtained following the general procedure. $R_f = 0.30$ (hexane/ethyl acetate, 7/3) ¹H NMR (500.0 MHz, CDCl₃): 1.96 (m, 4H, H-3,6-julolidine); 2.27 (t, 1H, ⁴J = 2.5, HC=C); 2.75 (m, 4H, H-4,5-julolidine); 3.31 (m, 4H, H-2,7-julolidine); 4.19 (dd, 2H, ³J = 5.3, ⁴J = 2.5, CH₂N); 6.37 (bt, 1H,



 ${}^{3}J = 5.3$, NH); 7.45 (s, 2H, H-8,10-julolidine); 8.03 (t, 1H, ${}^{4}J = 0.5$, HC=C). ${}^{13}C$ NMR (125.7 MHz,

CDCl₃): 21.07 (CH₂-3,6-julolidine); 27.53 (CH₂-4,5-julolidine); 29.92 (CH₂N); 50.13 (CH₂-2,7-julolidine); 71.94 (HC=C); 79.10 (C=CH); 92.44 (HC=C-CN); 118.61 (C-9-julolidine); 119.26 (CN); 120.91 (C-4a,4c-julolidine); 131.19 (CH-8,10-julolidine); 147.13 (C-4b-julolidine); 152.89 (HC=C-CN); 162.33 (CO). HRMS: calculated for C₁₉H₂₀ON₃ [M+H]⁺: 306.1601; found: 306.1602. Anal. calcd for C₁₉H₁₉N₃O: C, 74.73; H, 6.27; N, 13.76. Found: C, 74.54; H, 6.21; N, 13.57.

(E)-2-Cyano-3-[4-(dimethylamino)phenyl]-N-(prop-2-yn-1-yl)acrylamide (VII)

Yellow solid (1.20 g, 95%) was obtained following the general procedure. $R_f = 0.26$ (hexane/ethyl acetate, 7/3) ¹H NMR (600.1 MHz, CDCl₃): 2.28 (t, 1H, ⁴J = 2.6, HC=C); 3.10 (s, 6H, (CH₃)₂N); 4.20 (dd, 2H, ³J = 5.3, ⁴J = 2.6, CH₂N); 6.43 (bt, 1H, ³J = 5.3, NH); 6.72 (m, 2H, H-*m*-C₆H₄NMe₂); 7.88 (m, 2H, H-*o*-



 $C_6H_4NMe_2$); 8.16 (s, 1H, HC=C). ¹³C NMR (150.9 MHz, CDCl₃): 29.98 (CH₂N); 40.15 (CH₃N); 72.06 (HC=C); 78.92 (C=CH); 94.82 (HC=C-CN); 111.75 (CH-*m*-C₆H₄NMe₂); 118.64 (CN); 119.79 (C-*i*-C₆H₄NMe₂); 133.56 (CH-*o*-C₆H₄NMe₂); 153.01 (HC=C-CN); 153.11 (C-*p*-C₆H₄NMe₂); 161.77 (CO). HRMS for C₁₅H₁₅N₃NaO: [M+Na]⁺ calculated 276.1107, found 276.1107. Anal. calcd for C₁₅H₁₅N₃O: C, 71.13; H, 5.97; N, 16.59. Found: C, 70.74; H, 5.92; N, 16.29.



Dry DMF (4 ml) was added to a flask containing 5-iodo-2'-deoxycytidine **VIII** (176 mg, 0.5 mmol), corresponding acetylene **VI** or **VII** (0.55 mmol), PdCl₂(PPh₃)₂ (18 mg, 5% mol), CuI (5 mg, 5% mol) and the mixture was purged and refilled with argon for 3–4 times. Triethylamine (0.21 ml, 1.5 mmol) was added via syringe and the mixture was stirred at 80 °C until the complete consumption of the

starting nucleoside as monitored by TLC (CH₂Cl₂ / MeOH, 9/1). The mixture was concentrated on a rotavap; the crude products were purified by column chromatography (MeOH in dichloromethane, $5\rightarrow$ 15%).

(*E*)-*N*-[3-(2'-Deoxycytidine-5-yl)prop-2-yn-1-yl]-2-cyano-3-(julolidine-9-yl)acrylamide (dC^{VJ}, 3a)

Yellow solid (233 mg, 88%) was obtained following the general procedure). $R_f = 0.20$ (dichloromethane/MeOH, 9/1). ¹H NMR (500.0 MHz, DMSO- d_6): 1.86 (m, 4H, H-3,6julolidine); 1.97 (ddd, 1H, $J_{gem} = 13.2$, $J_{2'b,1'} = 7.2$, $J_{2'b,3'} = 6.0$, H-2'b); 2.13 (ddd, 1H, $J_{gem} = 13.2$, $J_{2'a,1'} = 6.0$, $J_{2'a,3'} = 3.4$, H-2'a); 2.67 (m, 4H, H-4,5-julolidine); 3.31 (m, 4H, H-2,7-



julolidine); 3.54, 3.60 (2 × ddd, 2 × 1H, $J_{gem} = 12.0$, $J_{5',OH} = 5.2$, $J_{5',4'} = 3.6$, H-5'); 3.78 (q, 1H, $J_{4',3'} = J_{4',5'} = 3.6$, H-4'); 4.19 (m, 1H, H-3'); 4.22 (d, 2H, J = 5.3, CH₂N); 5.06 (t, 1H, $J_{OH,5'} = 5.2$, OH-5'); 5.20 (d, 1H, $J_{OH,3'} = 4.2$, OH-3'); 6.11 (dd, 1H, $J_{1',2'} = 7.2$, 6.0, H-1'); 6.87 (bs, 1H, NH_aH_b); 7.44 (s, 2H, H-8,10-julolidine); 7.82 (bs, 1H, NH_aH_b); 7.84 (s, 1H, HC=C); 8.13 (s, 1H, H-6); 8.41 (t, 1H, J = 5.3, NH). ¹³C NMR (125.7 MHz, DMSO- d_6): 21.07 (CH₂-3,6-julolidine); 27.53 (CH₂-4,5-julolidine); 30.38 (CH₂N); 40.98 (CH₂-2'); 49.54 (CH₂-2,7-julolidine); 61.23 (CH₂-5'); 70.37 (CH-3'); 74.41 (cyt-C=C-CH₂-); 85.53 (CH-1'); 87.66 (CH-4'); 89.55 (C-5); 92.50 (cyt-C=C-CH₂-); 93.79 (HC=C-CN); 117.68 (C-9-julolidine); 118.73 (CN); 120.65 (C-4a,4c-julolidine); 130.62 (CH-8,10-julolidine); 144.01 (CH-6); 147.08 (C-4b-julolidine); 151.06 (HC=C-CN); 153.64 (C-2); 162.69 (CONH); 164.69 (C-4). HRMS for C₂₈H₃₀O₅N₆Na: [M+Na]⁺ calculated 553.2170, found 553.2170.

(*E*)-*N*-[3-(2'-Deoxycytidine-5-yl)prop-2-yn-1-yl]-2-cyano-3-[4-(dimethylamino)phenyl]acrylamide (dC^{VDP}, 3b)

Yellow solid (209 mg, 87%) was obtained following the general procedure). $R_f = 0.19$ (dichloromethane / MeOH, 9/1). ¹H NMR (500.0 MHz, DMSO- d_6): 1.97 (ddd, 1H, $J_{gem} = 13.2$, $J_{2'b,1'} = 7.3$, $J_{2'b,3'} = 6.0$, H-2'b); 2.13 (ddd, 1H, $J_{gem} = 13.2$, $J_{2'a,1'} = 6.0$, $J_{2'a,3'} = 3.6$, H-2'a); 3.06 (s, 6H, (CH₃)₂N); 3.54, 3.60 (2 × ddd, 2 × 1H, $J_{gem} = 11.9$, $J_{5',OH} = 5.1$, $J_{5',4'} =$



3.6, H-5'); 3.78 (q, 1H, $J_{4',3'} = J_{4',5'} = 3.6$, H-4'); 4.19 (m, 1H, H-3'); 4.24 (d, 2H, J = 5.2, CH₂N); 5.07 (t,

1H, $J_{OH,5'} = 5.1$, OH-5'); 5.21 (d, 1H, $J_{OH,3'} = 4.2$, OH-3'); 6.11 (dd, 1H, $J_{1',2'} = 7.3$, 6.0, H-1'); 6.83 (m, 2H, H-m-C₆H₄NMe₂); 6.87, 7.82 (2 × bs, 2 × 1H, NH₂); 7.88 (m, 2H, H-o-C₆H₄NMe₂); 8.00 (s, 1H, HC=C); 8.13 (s, 1H, H-6); 8.54 (t, 1H, J = 5.2, NH). ¹³C NMR (125.7 MHz, DMSO- d_6): 30.42 (CH₂N); 39.78 (CH₃N); 40.99 (CH₂-2'); 61.24 (CH₂-5'); 70.38 (CH-3'); 74.50 (cyt-C=C-CH₂-); 85.55 (CH-1'); 87.66 (CH-4'); 89.55 (C-5); 92.32 (cyt-C=C-CH₂-); 96.18 (HC=C-CN); 111.88 (CH-m-C₆H₄NMe₂); 118.31 (CN); 118.80 (C-i-C₆H₄NMe₂); 133.09 (CH-o-C₆H₄NMe₂); 144.07 (CH-6); 151.23 (HC=C-CN); 153.31 (C-p-C₆H₄NMe₂); 153.65 (C-2); 162.46 (CONH); 164.68 (C-4). HRMS for C₂₄H₂₆N₆O₅Na: [M+Na]⁺ calculated 501.1857, found 501.1857

5'-O-Triphosphorylation of nucleosides 3a and 3b

(*E*)-*N*-[3-(2'-deoxycytidine-5-yl)prop-2-yn-1-yl]-2-cyano-3-(julolidine-9-yl)acrylamide 5'-*O*-triphosphate (dC^{VJ}TP, 4a)

Dry trimethyl phosphate (2 ml) was added to an argon-purged flask containing nucleoside dC^{VJ} (112 mg, 0.21 mmol). The resulting solution was cooled down to 0 °C and a solution of POCl₃ (32 μ L, 0.34 mmol) in trimethyl phosphate (0.5 mL)



was added dropwise. After 3 hours stirring at 0 °C, a solution of (*n*-Bu₃NH)₂H₂P₂O₇ (522 mg, 0.95 mmol) and *n*-Bu₃N (0.23 mL, 0.95 mmol) in dry DMF (2.5 mL) was added. The solution was stirred for another 60 min at 0 °C and then quenched by the addition of 1M TEAB (3 mL). The mixture was concentrated on a rotavap; the residue was co-evaporated with distilled water three times. After that the crude mixture was diluted with water to a total volume of ca. 15 mL and unreacted nucleoside was separated by filtration. The aqueous solution was purified by semi-preparative HPLC using a linear gradient of methanol (5–100%) in 0.1 M TEAB buffer. The appropriate fractions were combined and evaporated on a rotavap. The viscous orange oil was co-evaporated with distilled water three times. The product was converted to sodium salt on an ion-exchange column (Dowex 50WX8 in Na⁺ cycle) and freeze-dried. The title compound was obtained as orange solid (16 mg, 9%). ¹H NMR (500.0 MHz, D₂O, pD = 7.1, phosphate buffer, ref(dioxane) = 3.75 ppm): 1.69 (bm, 4H, H-3,6-julolidine); 2.21 (dt, 1H, $J_{gem} = 13.9$, $J_{2'b,1'} = J_{2'b,3'} = 6.4$, H-2'b); 2.41 (m, 5H, H-2'a, H-4,5-julolidine); 3.08 (m, 4H, H-2,7-julolidine); 4.14-4.21 (m, 3H, H-4',5'); 4.27, 4.33 (2 × d, 2 × 1H, $J_{gem} = 18.2$, CH₂N); 4.55 (m, 1H, H-3'); 6.07 (t, 1H, $J_{1'2'} = 6.4$, H-1'); 7.01 (bs, 2H, H-8,10-julolidine); 7.52 (s, 1H, HC=C); 7.99 (s, 1H, H-3'); 6.07 (t, 1H, $J_{1'2'} = 6.4$, H-1'); 7.01 (bs, 2H, H-8,10-julolidine); 7.52 (s, 1H, HC=C); 7.99 (s, 1H, H-3'); 6.07 (t, 1H, $J_{1'2'} = 6.4$, H-1'); 7.01 (bs, 2H, H-8,10-julolidine); 7.52 (s, 1H, HC=C); 7.99 (s, 1H, H-3'); 6.07 (t, 1H, $J_{1'2'} = 6.4$, H-1'); 7.01 (bs, 2H, H-8,10-julolidine); 7.52 (s, 1H, HC=C); 7.99 (s, 1H, H-3'); 6.07 (t, 1H, $J_{1'2'} = 6.4$, H-1'); 7.01 (bs, 2H, H-8,10-julolidine); 7.52 (s, 1H, HC=C); 7.99 (s, 1H, H-3'); 6.07 (t, 1H, $J_{1'2'} = 6.4$, H-1'); 7.01 (bs, 2H, H-8,10-julolidine); 7.52 (s, 1H, HC=C); 7.99 (s, 1H, H-1); 7.01 (bs, 2H, H-8,10-julolidine); 7.5

6). ¹³C NMR (125.7 MHz, D₂O, pD = 7.1, phosphate buffer, ref(dioxane) = 69.3 ppm): 23.15 (CH₂-3,6-julolidine); 29.69 (CH₂-4,5-julolidine); 33.07 (CH₂N); 41.86 (CH₂-2'); 52.42 (CH₂-2,7-julolidine); 67.89 (d, $J_{C,P} = 5.4$, CH₂-5'); 72.92 (CH-3'); 75.68 (cyt-C=C-CH₂-); 88.08 (d, $J_{C,P} = 8.6$, CH-4'); 89.11 (CH-1'); 92.20 (C-5); 94.63 (cyt-C=C-CH₂-); 95.16 (HC=C-CN); 120.14 (C-9-julolidine); 121.91 (CN); 123.46 (C-4a,4c-julolidine); 133.98 (CH-8,10-julolidine); 147.48 (CH-6); 150.62 (C-4b-julolidine); 155.04 (HC=C-CN); 158.33 (C-2); 167.63 (C-4); 168.10 (CONH). ³¹P NMR (202.4 MHz, D₂O, pD = 7.1, ref(phosphate buffer) = 2.35 ppm): -21.04 (dd, *J* = 19.1, 18.9, P_β); -10.16 (d, *J* = 18.9, P_α); -6.86 (d, *J* = 19.1, P_γ). HRMS for C₂₈H₃₀O₁₄N₆Na₂P₃: [M+2Na+H]⁻ calculated 813.0823; found 813.0825.

(*E*)-*N*-[3-(2'-Deoxycytidine-5-yl)prop-2-yn-1-yl]-2-cyano-3-[4-(dimethylamino)phenyl]acrylamide 5'-*O*-triphosphate (dC^{VDP}TP, 4b)

Dry trimethyl phosphate (3 ml) was added to an argon-purged flask containing nucleoside dC^{VDP} (165 mg, 0.345 mmol). The resulting solution was cooled down to 0 °C and a solution of POCl₃ (57 µL, 0.61 mmol) in trimethyl phosphate (1 mL) was



added dropwise. After 3 hours stirring at 0 °C, a solution of $(n-Bu_3NH)_2H_2P_2O_7$ (850 mg, 1.55 mmol) and *n*-Bu₃N (0.37 mL, 1.55 mmol) in dry DMF (4.5 mL) was added. The solution was stirred for another 60 min at 0 °C and then quenched by the addition of 1M TEAB (5 mL). The mixture was concentrated on a rotavap; the residue was co-evaporated with distilled water three times. After that the crude mixture was diluted with water to a total volume of ca. 20 mL and unreacted nucleoside was separated by filtration. The aqueous solution was purified by semi-preparative HPLC using a linear gradient of methanol (5–100%) in 0.1 M TEAB buffer. The appropriate fractions were combined and evaporated on a rotavap. The viscous yellow oil was co-evaporated with distilled water three times. The product was converted to sodium salt on an ion-exchange column (Dowex 50WX8 in Na⁺ cycle) and freeze-dried. The title compound was obtained as yellow solid (25 mg, 9%). ¹H NMR (600.1 MHz, D₂O, pD = 7.1, phosphate buffer, ref(dioxane) = 3.75 ppm): 2.24 (ddd, 1H, $J_{gem} = 14.0$, $J_{2'b,1'} = 6.8$, $J_{2'b,3'} = 6.2$, H-2'b); 2.40 (ddd, 1H, $J_{gem} = 14.0$, $J_{2'a,1'} = 6.2$, $J_{2'a,3'} = 4.6$, H-2'a); 2.94 (s, 6H, (CH₃)₂N); 4.16-4.23 (m, 3H, H-4',5'); 4.29, 4.34 (2 × d, 2 × 1H, $J_{gem} = 17.8$, CH₂N); 4.56 (m, 1H, H-3'); 6.12 (dd, 1H, $J_{1',2'} = 6.8$, 6.2, H-1'); 6.55 (m, 2H, H-m-C₆H₄NMe₂); 7.63 (m, 2H, H-o-C₆H₄NMe₂); 7.77 (s, 1H, HC=C); 8.03 (s, 1H, H-6). ¹³C NMR (150.9 MHz, D₂O, pD = 7.1, phosphate buffer, ref(dioxane) = 69.3 ppm): 33.15 (CH₂N); 41.83 (CH₂-2'); 41.98 (CH₃N); 67.79 (d, $J_{C,P} = 5.3$, CH₂-5'); 72.72 (CH-3'); 75.90 (cyt-C=C-CH₂-); 88.11 (d, $J_{C,P} = 8.7$, CH-4'); 88.99 (CH-1'); 94.68 (C-5); 94.86 (cyt-C=C-CH₂-); 95.34 (HC=C-CN); 114.18 (CH-*m*-C₆H₄NMe₂); 121.20 (C-*i*-C₆H₄NMe₂); 121.27 (CN); 136.56 (CH*o*-C₆H₄NMe₂); 147.56 (CH-6); 155.75 (HC=C-CN); 156.50 (C-*p*-C₆H₄NMe₂); 158.51 (C-2); 167.71 (C-4); 167.80 (CONH). ³¹P NMR (202.3 MHz, D₂O, pD = 7.1, ref(phosphate buffer) = 2.35 ppm): – 21.62 (dd, J = 19.8, 18.6, P_β); -11.12 (d, J = 18.6, P_α); -5.96 (d, J = 19.8, P_γ). HRMS for C₂₄H₂₆O₁₄N₆Na₂P₃: [M+2Na+H]⁻ calculated 761.0521 found 761.0524.

D. Enzymatic incorporation of modified dNTPs into DNA

Materials and methods

Synthetic oligonucleotides (primers and templates for PEX and NEAR, Table S1) were purchased from Generi Biotech (Czech Republic). Double-stranded 100bp DNA ladder was purchased from New England Biolabs. Single stranded DNA ladder (10, 20, 50, 98 bases) was prepared using synthetic oligonucleotides **L10**, **L20**, **L50** and **T1R** (Table S1) as described previously.^{S6} DNA polymerase Vent(exo–), nicking enzyme Nt.BstNBI, corresponding reaction buffers, as well as natural nucleoside triphosphates (dATP, dCTP, dGTP, dTTP) were purchased from New England Biolabs. KOD XL DNA polymerase and corresponding reaction buffer were obtained from Merck Millipore. Streptavidin magnetic particles were obtained from Roche. All solutions for biochemical reactions were prepared using Milli-Q water. Primers for analytical primer extension experiments were labeled using T4 polynucleotide kinase (New England Biolabs) and [γ^{32} P]-ATP (Institute of Isotopes Co., Ltd.; Hungary) according to standard techniques. Radioactive gels were visualized by phosphorimaging using Storage Phosphor Screens (GE Healthcare) and Typhoon 9410 imager (Amersham Biosciences). Mass spectra of oligonucleotides were measured by MALDI-TOF, on UltrafleXtreme MALDI-TOF/TOF mass spectrometer (Bruker Daltonics, Germany), with 1 kHz smartbeam II laser.

Analytical primer extension

The reaction mixture (20 μ L) contained 5'-³²P-labelled primer (3 μ M, 1 μ L), unlabelled primer (100 μ M, 0.77 μ L), template (100 μ M, 0.8 μ L), corresponding DNA polymerase (0.22–0.23 U), either natural or modified dNTPs (4 mM each, 0.4 μ L) and reaction buffer (10×, 2 μ L) supplied by the manufacturer with the enzyme. The reaction mixture was incubated at 60 °C for 40 min. The reaction was stopped by the addition of PAGE stop solution (40 μ L; 80% [v/v] formamide, 20mM EDTA, 0.025% [w/v] bromophenol blue, 0.025% [w/v] xylene cyanol) and heated at 95 °C for 5 min. Aliquots (3 μ L) were subjected to vertical electrophoresis in 12.5% denaturing polyacrylamide gel containing 1× TBE buffer (pH 8.0) and 7M urea at 42 mA for 50 min. The gel was dried in vacuo (80 °C, 70 min) and visualized by phosphor imaging autoradiography.

Semi-preparative primer extension with magnetic separation

The reaction mixture (100 μ L) containing KOD XL DNA polymerase (2.5 U/ μ L, 0.45 μ L), 10x concentrate of the KOD reaction buffer provided by the manufacturer of the enzyme (10 μ L),

biotinylated template (100 μ M, 4 μ L), primer (100 μ M, 4 μ L), dNTPs (dGTP, dTTP, dATP, dC^xTP; 4 mM each, 5 μ L) was incubated at 60 °C for 40 minutes. The reaction was stoped by cooling to 4 °C. Streptavidine magnetic particles (120 μ l) were washed with binding buffer (3 × 300 μ l, 10mM Tris, 1mM EDTA, 100mM NaCl, pH 7.5). The PEX solution (100 μ L) and binding buffer (100 μ l) were added to the magnetic beads. The mixture was incubated in a thermal mixer for 35 min at 15 °C and 1200 rpm. Then the magnetic beads were washed with wash buffer (3 × 300 μ l, 10mM Tris, 1mM EDTA, 500mM NaCl, pH 7.5) and water (4 × 300 μ l). Then water (100 μ l) was added and the sample was denatured for 2 min at 40 °C and 900 rpm. The beads were separated and the solution containing ssDNA was transferred into a clean vial. Concentration of the resulting DNA solutions was determined on a NanoDrop.The product was analysed by MALDI-TOF mass spectrometry.

Nicking enzyme amplification reaction (NEAR) with modified dNTPs on analytical scale

The reaction mixture (50 µL) contained the template (0.125 µM), primer (0.125 µM), modified $dC^{x}TP$ (187.5 µM), natural dNTPs (dGTP, dTTP, dATP; 125 µM each), 1× ThermoPol buffer (10 mM KCl, 10 mM (NH₄)₂SO₄, 20 mM Tris-HCl/pH 8.8/, 0.1% Trit on-X-100, and 2mM MgSO₄), and 0.5× NEBuffer 3 (50mM NaCl, 25 mM Tris-HCl/pH 7.9/, 5 mM MgCl₂, and 0.5 mM DTT), Vent(exo–) DNA polymerase (7.5 U) and nickase Nt.BstNBI (30 U). The reaction mixture was incubated in a thermal mixer at 55 °C, 400 rpm for 3 h. The reaction was stopped by cooling to 4 °C. The products were analyzed by agarose gel electrophoresis using 4% agarose gels stained with GelRedTM (Biotium). Samples for electrophoresis were prepared by mixing 1.6 µL of TrackItTM Cyan/Orange loading buffer (Invitrogen) and 8 µL of the reaction mixture or ssDNA ladder. The gel was run for 60 min at 120 V and imaged using electronic dual wave transilluminator equipped with UltraCam 8gD digital imaging system (Ultra-Lum). For MALDI-TOF mass spectrometry analysis the reaction mixtures were purified on Illustra MicroSpin G-25 columns (GE Healthcare) to remove the unincorporated nucleotides and buffer salts.

Nicking enzyme amplification reaction (NEAR) with dC^{VDP}TP on semi-preparative scale

The reaction mixture (500 μ L) contained the template (0.125 μ M), primer (0.125 μ M), modified **dC**^{VDP}**TP** (187.5 μ M), natural dNTPs (dGTP, dTTP, dATP; 125 μ M each), 1× ThermoPol buffer (10 mM KCl, 10 mM (NH₄)₂SO₄, 20 mM Tris-HCl/pH 8.8/, 0.1% Trit on-X-100, and 2 mM MgSO₄), and 0.5× NEBuffer 3 (50mM NaCl, 25 mM Tris-HCl/pH 7.9/, 5 mM MgCl₂, and 0.5 mM DTT), Vent(exo-) DNA polymerase (50 U) and nickase Nt.BstNBI (280 U). The reaction mixture was incubated at 55

°C, 400 rpm for 3 h. After that the reaction was stopped by cooling to 4 °C, the solution was concentrated on a vacuum concentrator to approximately 100 μ L. The viscous concentrate was subjected to HPLC purification on a XBridge OST C18 Column (Waters; 2.5 μ m particle size, 4.6 mm × 50mm). A linear gradient of triethylammonium acetate buffer (TEAA, pH = 7.0) and acetonitrile with flow rate 1 mL/min was used. Mobile phase A corresponds to 0.1 M TEAA in HPLC-grade water, mobile phase B to acetonitrile/0.1 M TEAA in HPLC-grade water 20/80 (v/v). The gradient started with 60% mobile phase A and 40% mobile phase B, going linearly to 80% mobile phase B in 53 min. The fractions containing the product were combined and evaporated on a vacuum concentrator. The residue was dissolved in a known volume of water and UV absorbance was measured on a Nanodrop. The products were analyzed by MALDI-TOF mass spectrometry.

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR)

The reaction mixture (10 μ L) contained KOD XL DNA polymerase (2.5 U/ μ L, 0.1 μ L), KOD XL reaction buffer supplied by the manufacturer (10×, 1 μ L), primers **P1R** and **P2R** (10 μ M; 1 μ L of each), 98-mer template **T1R** (1 μ M, 0.25 μ L). The amounts of dNTPs depend on whether only natural dNTPs or modified **dC**^{**x**}**TP** together with the three remaining natural dNTPs were incorporated. The following amounts were used: positive control – four natural dNTPs (2mM of each, 0.15 μ L); negative control – three natural dNTPs (10 mM of dGTP, dTTP, and dATP, 0.6 μ L); modified **dC**^{**x**}**TPs** – **4a** or **4b** with three natural dNTPs (10 mM of each, 0.6 μ L). After the initial denaturation for 3 min at 94 °C, 40 PCR cycles were run under the following conditions: denaturation for 1 min at 94 °C, annealing for 1 min at 51°C, extension for 2 min at 72 °C. These PCR process was terminated with a final extension step for 6 min at 72 °C. The reaction was stopped by cooling to 4 °C. The products were analyzed by agarose gel electrophoresis using 2% agarose gel stained with GelRedTM (Biotium). Samples for electrophoresis were prepared by mixing 1 μ L of 6× DNA Loading Dye (Thermo Scientific) and 5 μ L of the reaction mixture. The gel was run for 70 min at 120 V and imaged using electronic dual wave transilluminator equipped with UltraCam 8gD digital imaging system (Ultra-Lum).

E. UV-Vis and Fluorescence measurements

General notes

Spectroscopy grade solvents (DMSO, ethylene glycol, glycerol) were purchased from Sigma Aldrich and Alfa Aesar. Absorption coefficients of natural and modified ODNs (ε_{260}) were estimated using the OligoCalc.^{S7} The absorption of the modified **d**C^X analogues at 260 nm was assumed to be identical with dC. UV-visible spectra of individual compounds were measured on a Cary 100 UV-Vis spectrometer (Agilent Technologies). UV-vis spectra of oligonucleotides were measured on a Nanodrop 1000 spectrophotometer (Thermo Scientific). Fluorescence spectra were measured on a Jasco 6600 or Fluorolog (Horiba) spectrofluorimeters.

Fluorescence of FMRs in a gradient of viscosity

For the measurements of fluorescence in the gradient of viscosity (ethylene glycol / glycerol) we used procedure described elsewhere^{S1} with minor modifications. Solutions of different viscosities were prepared by mixing known volumes of pre-stained EG, EG and glycerol. Stock solutions of FMRs **1a**, **1b**, **3a** and **3b** were prepared in DMSO (1–5 mg per 0.5 mL DMSO). Pre-stained ethylene glycol was prepared by adding a small volume of the DMSO stock solution (10–50 μ L) to 10 mL of ethylene glycol; absorbance of the resulting solutions was measured on a UV-Vis spectrometer. Pre-stained ethylene glycol, ethylene glycol and glycerol were mixed in proportions shown in table S3.

Viscosity	Components (mL) ^a		
(mPa · s)	pre-stained ethylene glycol ^b	ethylene glycol ^b	glycerol
74.0	Х	3.0-x	2.0
112.2	Х	2.5–x	2.5
170.2	Х	2.0-x	3.0
258.1	Х	1.5–x	3.5
391.4	x	1.0-x	4.0

Table S3. Preparation of the samples for measurement of fluorescence in the gradient of viscosity

Footnotes: **a**: total volume of each sample was 5 mL. **b**: x is the volume of pre-stained ethylene glycol (mL) needed to give absorbance 0.05 at λ_{max} in the final 5mL solution; x was calculated for each compound from the UV-vis absorption spectra of pre-stained EG by formula: x (mL) = (0.05 × 5 / A_{PS-EG}) where A_{PS-EG} is the absorbance of pre-stained EG at λ_{max} .

Glycerol was heated on a water bath to 55–60 °C to allow for better pipetting. Solutions were prepared in 15 mL plastic tubes and mixed thoroughly on a tube roller for 30–60 minutes. Thorough mixing was

crucial so the tubes were watched over this time. Fluorescence spectra were recorded at room temperature (22–23 °C) in quartz cuvettes (internal volume 1.4 mL). Samples were excited at their absorption maxima. Intensity of fluorescence at the emission maximum was measured for each sample; within each series, the intensity of fluorescence was normalized to the intensity of fluorescence of the less viscous solution (I_F for 74.0 mPa·s = 1). Preparations and measurements were triplicated. Förster–Hoffmann plot was obtained by plotting log F vs logarithm of viscosity (log η).

Fluorescence titration experiments

Titrations were performed in a 100 μ L quartz cuvette at room temperature (22 °C). Initial solution (120 μ L) contained 1 μ M ssDNA probe **ON1** (Table S2) in PBS (10 mM phosphate buffer pH 7.4; 100 mM NaCl). Excitation wavelength was 430 nm. Aliquots (0.2 μ L) of SSB, BSA or PBS-glycerol were added; the solution was carefully mixed with a pipette and equilibrated for 2–3 minutes before the fluorescence spectrum was recorded.

Solutions for titration were prepared as follows.

SSB

Single-strand Binding Protein from *Escherichia coli* (Sigma-Aldrich) was used as supplied (Solution in 20 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, 0.5 M NaCl, 0.1 mM EDTA, 0.1 mM DTT, 50% glycerol). The concentration of the supplied solution determined on a Nanodrop ($\varepsilon_{280} = 30250 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ for SSB monomer^{S8}) was ca. 50 µM (SSB tetramer).

BSA

Bovine serum albumin (New England Biolabs) was diluted to the same concentration as SSB (50 μ M) in PBS (10 mM phosphate buffer pH = 7.4; 100 mM NaCl). $\varepsilon_{280} = 43800 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$.^{S9}

PBS-glycerol

PBS-glycerol was prepared by mixing 100 mM phosphate buffer pH = 7.4 (100 μ L), 1 M NaCl (100 μ L), water (300 μ L) and glycerol (500 μ L).

F. References

- **S1**. J. Sutharsan, D. Lichlyter, N. E. Wright, M. Dakanali, M. A. Haidekker and E. A. Theodorakis, *Tetrahedron*, 2010, **66**, 2582–2588.
- S2. H. Wang, Z. Lu, S. J. Lord, K. A. Willets, J. A. Bertke, S. D. Bunge, W. E. Moerner and R. J. Twieg, *Tetrahedron*, 2007, 63, 103–114.
- **S3**. A. Bringhen and U. Huber, 6416746 B1, US, 2002.
- S4. U. P. Kreher, A. E. Rosamilia, C. L. Raston, J. L. Scott and C. R. Strauss, Org. Lett., 2003, 5, 3107–3110.
- S5. Y. Matvieiev, I. Karpenko, A. Kulinich, A. Ryabitskii, V. Pivovarenko, S. Shishkina, O. Shishkin and V. Kalchenko, *Tetrahedron Lett.*, 2011, 52, 3922–3925.
- S6. P. Ménová, V. Raindlová and M. Hocek, Bioconjugate Chem., 2013, 24, 1081-1093.
- S7. W. A. Kibbe, Nucleic Acids Res., 2007, 35, W43–W46.
- S8. K. R. Williams, E. K. Spicer, M. B. LoPresti, R. A. Guggenheimer and J. W. Chase, J. Biol. Chem., 1983, 258, 3346–3355.
- S9. T. Peters, The Plasma Proteins., Academic Press., 1975, pp 133–181.

G. Copies of the NMR spectra

1 H and 13 C spectra of intermediate V



 $^1\mathrm{H}$ and APT spectra of intermediate \mathbf{VI}



 $^1\mathrm{H}$ and APT spectra of intermediate \mathbf{VII}



¹H and APT spectra of nucleoside dC^{VJ} (3a)



¹H and APT spectra of nucleoside $dC^{VDP}(3b)$



¹H, APT and ³¹P spectra of $dC^{VJ}TP$ (4a)





¹H, APT and ³¹P spectra of $dC^{VDP}TP$ (4b)





H. Copies of MALDI spectra

See Table S2 for sequences











