

Reductive decyanation of malononitriles and cyanoacetates using photoactivated neutral organic super-electron-donors

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Supplementary information

General experimental information

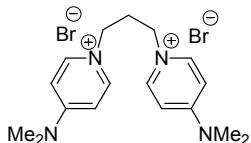
All the reactions were performed in oven-dried or flame-dried apparatus and preparation of the substrates was carried out under argon atmosphere using dry solvents. Diethyl ether, tetrahydrofuran, dichloromethane and hexane were dried with a Pure-Solv 400 solvent purification system by Innovative Technology Inc., U.S.A. A glove box (Innovative Technology Inc., U.S.A.) was used to weigh out the super electron donor (SED) into the reaction flask. All the UV reactions were carried out by using two focused UV lamps with filters ($\lambda = 365$ nm, each 100 watts) placed opposite to each other, around the reaction flask, at room temperature. All the reagents were bought from commercial suppliers and used without further purification unless stated otherwise. A Büchi rotary evaporator was used to concentrate the reaction mixtures. Thin layer chromatography (TLC) was performed using aluminium-backed sheets of silica gel and visualized under a UV lamp (254 nm). The plates were developed using vanillin or KMnO₄ solution. Column chromatography was performed to purify compounds by using silica gel 60 (200-400 mesh).

Proton (¹H) NMR spectra were recorded at 400 MHz on a Bruker DPX spectrometer or at 500 MHz on a Bruker DRX spectrometer. Carbon NMR (¹³C) spectra were recorded at 100 MHz or 125 MHz respectively. The chemical shifts are quoted in parts per million (ppm) by taking tetramethylsilane as a reference ($\delta = 0$) but calibrated on the residual non-deuterated solvent signal. Signal multiplicities are abbreviated as: s, singlet; d, doublet; t, triplet; q, quartet; m, multiplet; bs, broad singlet; coupling constants are given in Hertz (Hz).

Infra-Red spectra were recorded on a Perkin Elmer Spectrum One FT IR Spectrometer either pressed as discs in KBr or as films applied on NaCl crystal plates or using an ATR-IR spectrometer. Melting points were determined on a Gallenkamp Melting point apparatus. High resolution mass spectra were recorded at the EPSRC National Mass Spectrometry Service Centre, Swansea. The spectra were recorded using electron ionisation (EI), chemical ionization (CI), fast atom bombardment (FAB) or electrospray ionization (ESI) techniques as stated for each compound.

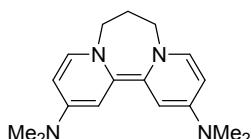
Synthesis of 4-DMAP-derived donor **8**¹

Synthesis of 1,3-bis(*N,N'*-dimethyl-4-aminopyridinium)propane dibromide²



A solution of 4-(dimethylamino)pyridine (9.16 g, 75 mmol, 2.5 eq.) and 1,3-dibromopropane (6.06 g, 30 mmol, 1.0 eq.) in a flask containing acetonitrile (60 mL) was stirred at reflux for 16 h, under argon. Diethyl ether (10 mL) was added to the reaction flask and the product precipitated instantaneously, and was then filtered. To precipitate more of the solid, an additional amount of diethyl ether (20 mL) was added to the filtrate. After filtration, the solid was washed with diethyl ether (3 x 50 mL) and dried under vacuum to give 1,3-bis(*N,N'*-dimethyl-4-aminopyridinium)propane dibromide (13 g, 97%) as a white solid m.p. 199-203 °C; [Found: (ESI⁺) (M-Br)⁺ 365.1338. C₁₇H₂₆BrN₄ (M-Br) requires 365.1335]; ν_{max}(KBr)/cm⁻¹ 3027, 2725, 2468, 1649, 1571, 1403; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d₆) δ 2.36 (2H, quintet, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CH₂CH₂CH₂), 3.18 (12H, s, NCH₃), 4.28 (4H, t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, NCH₂), 7.04 (4H, d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, ArH), 8.34 (4H, d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-d₆) δ 31.2 (CH₂), 39.8 (CH₃), 53.7 (CH₂), 107.8 (CH), 141.8 (CH), 155.8 (C); *m/z* (ESI⁺) 367 [(M-⁸¹Br)⁺, 28%], 365 [(M-⁷⁹Br)⁺, 28%], 285 (5), 143 (100).

Synthesis of *N,N,N',N'*-tetramethyl-7,8-dihydro-6*H*-dipyrido[1,2-a;2',1'-c][1,4] diazepine-2,12-diamine **8**¹



A mixture of 1,3-bis(*N,N'*-dimethyl-4-aminopyridinium)propane dibromide (13.38 g, 30 mmol, 1.0 eq.) and pre-washed NaH (~95%, stored in glovebox, 4.55 g, 180 mmol, 6 eq.) were taken in a Schlenk flask mounted with a dry ice condenser, and the atmosphere was made oxygen-free by flushing with argon. At this point, ammonia (75 mL) was condensed, left at reflux for 4 h and was subsequently allowed to evaporate overnight (14 h) under a steady argon flow. The flask was then transferred to an oxygen-free, moisture-free glove box. The solid was extracted with dry diethyl ether (300 mL) and the solvent was then removed by distillation and under vacuum (10-20 mbar) to give the pure *N,N,N',N'*-tetramethyl-7,8-

dihydro-6H-dipyrido-[1,2-a;2',1'-c][1,4]-diazepine-2,12-diamine **8** (7.61 g, 89%) as a purple-black, moisture-sensitive and highly oxygen-sensitive solid. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, benzene-d₆) δ 1.00 (2H, quintet, *J* = 6.3 Hz, CH₂CH₂CH₂), 2.46 [12H, s, N(CH₃)₂], 3.03 (4H, t, *J* = 6.3 Hz, NCH₂), 4.91 (2H, dd, *J* = 7.5, 2.2 Hz, ArH), 5.14 (2H, d, *J* = 2.2 Hz, ArH), 5.64 (2H, d, *J* = 7.5 Hz, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, benzene-d₆) δ 24.5 (CH₂), 40.8 (CH₃), 52.6 (CH₂), 95.8 (CH), 96.2 (CH), 116.0 (C), 138.7 (CH), 143.7 (C). The ¹H-NMR and ¹³C-NMR spectral data are consistent with the previously published data of **8**.¹

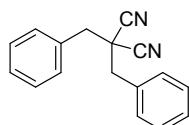
General procedure for UV-activated reductions

Under an inert atmosphere, a solution of the donor **8** in dry *N,N*-dimethylformamide (5 mL) was added to the flask containing the appropriate substrate in a glove-box. The sealed flask was then submitted to UV irradiation for a specified time, using two focused UV lamps (365 nm, each 100 watts). The reaction was then quenched with 1N HCl (10 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 10 mL). The combined organic layers were then washed once again with water (10 mL), brine (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The crude product was obtained after evaporation of solvent under reduced pressure using a rotary evaporator. Then, the crude product was adsorbed onto silica and purified by column chromatography, providing the corresponding reduced products in yields as stated.

General procedures for blank reactions

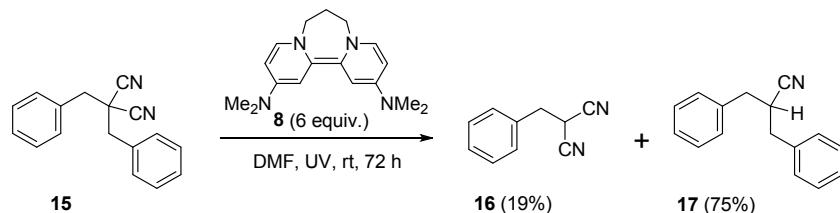
Following the preparation protocol devised for UV-activated reductions, reaction samples were prepared. Both the blank reactions and the original reaction were carried out at the same time for the same amount of time. After following the above discussed general work-up procedure, the crude product was adsorbed onto silica and purified by column chromatography, providing exclusively the starting material and the reduced product (where the reaction works) in yields as stated.

Synthesis of 2,2-dibenzylmalononitrile **15**³



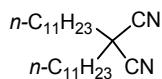
A solution of malononitrile (0.396 g, 6 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to the suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.528 g, 13.2 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (5 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 30 min. at room temperature and benzyl bromide (2.257 g, 13.2 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The resulting reaction mixture was further refluxed for 16 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (10 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 10 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (20% diethyl ether in petroleum ether) to afford 2,2-dibenzylmalononitrile **15** (1.316 g, 89%) as a white solid m.p. 128-130 °C; (lit.:³ 128-130 °C); [Found: (Cl⁺ corona) (M+H)⁺ 247.1234. C₁₇H₁₅N₂ (M+H) requires 247.1230]; ν_{max} (film) /cm⁻¹ 3032, 2933, 2247, 1496, 1442, 1269, 1089; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 3.26 (4H, s, ArCH₂), 7.40-7.44 (10H, m, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 41.3 (C), 43.6 (CH₂), 115.1 (C), 129.0 (CH), 129.1 (CH), 130.4 (CH), 132.1 (C); *m/z* (Cl⁺ corona) 247 [(M+H)⁺, 100 %], 222 (10%).

UV-activated reduction of 2,2-dibenzylmalononitrile **15**



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2,2-dibenzylmalononitrile **15** (0.098 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.682 g, 2.4 mmol, 6 eq.). After following the general work-up process, the crude product was purified by column chromatography (10% diethyl ether in petroleum ether) and afforded 2-benzyl-3-phenylpropanenitrile **17**⁴ (0.066 g, 75%), as a white solid m.p. 88-90 °C (lit.:⁴ 92-92.5 °C), and 2-benzylmalononitrile **16**⁵ (0.0119 g, 19%), as a white solid m.p. 84-86 °C (lit.:⁵ 88 °C).

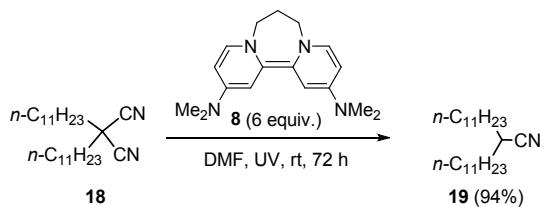
Synthesis of 2,2-diundecylmalononitrile **18**



A solution of malononitrile (0.396 g, 6 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.600 g, 15 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min at room temperature and 1-bromoundecane (3.104 g, 13.2 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 24 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (2% diethyl ether in petroleum ether) to yield *2,2-diundecylmalononitrile* **18** (1.598 g, 71%) as a white crystalline solid m.p. 40-42 °C. [Found: (CI corona⁺) (M+H)⁺ 375.3732. C₂₅H₄₇N₂ (M+H) requires 375.3734]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 2958, 2914, 2846, 2247, 1469, 1379, 719; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 0.89 [6H, t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, (CH₂)₁₀CH₃], 1.28-1.41 (32H, m, CCH₂CH₂(CH₂)₈CH₃), 1.63-1.71 (4H, m, CCH₂CH₂(CH₂)₈CH₃), 1.89-1.94 (4H, m, CCH₂(CH₂)₉CH₃); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 14.2 (CH₃), 22.8 (CH₂), 25.7 (CH₂), 29.0 (CH₂), 29.3 (CH₂), 29.4 (CH₂), 29.5 (CH₂), 29.7 (2 x CH₂), 29.8 (C), 32.0 (CH₂), 38.0 (CH₂), 116.0 (C); *m/z* (CI corona⁺) 375 [(M+H)⁺, 100%], 350 [(M-CN)+H]⁺, 26%], 327 (41).

UV-activated reduction of *2,2-diundecylmalononitrile* **18**

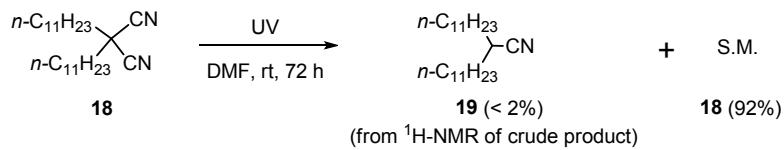
(a) Reaction with photoactivated **8**



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to *2,2-diundecylmalononitrile* **18** (0.149 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.682 g, 2.4 mmol, 6 eq.) for 72 h. After following the general work-up process, the crude product was purified by column chromatography (2% diethyl ether in petroleum ether) and provided *2-undecyltridecanenitrile* **19** (0.131 g, 94%) as a white crystalline solid m.p. 28-30 °C. [Found: (CI corona⁺) (M+H)⁺ 350.3778. C₂₄H₄₈N (M+H) requires 350.3781]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 2986, 2922, 2852, 2241, 1465, 1377, 721; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 0.89 [6H, t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, CH(CH₂)₁₀CH₃], 1.27-1.37 (32H, m, CHCH₂CH₂(CH₂)₈CH₃), 1.39-1.66 (8H, m,

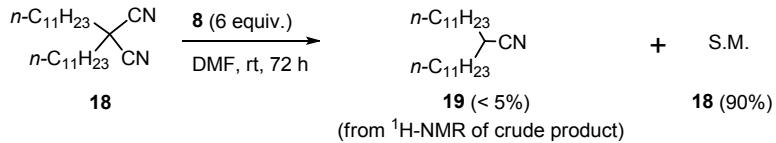
$\text{CHCH}_2\text{CH}_2(\text{CH}_2)_8\text{CH}_3$, 2.47-2.53 (1H, m, *CHCN*); ^{13}C -NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3) δ 14.3 (CH_3), 22.8 (CH_2), 27.3 (CH_2), 29.3 (CH_2), 29.48 (CH_2), 29.52 (CH_2), 29.7 (CH_2), 29.8 (2 x CH_2), 31.8 (CH), 32.1 (CH_2), 32.4 (CH_2), 122.7 (C); *m/z* ((CI corona $^+$) 350 [(M+H) $^+$, 86%], 327 (100), 220 (24), 155 (16).

(b) Photoactivated reaction without 8



The general procedure for blank reactions was applied to 2,2-diundecylmalononitrile **18** (0.149 g, 0.4 mmol) without using donor **8**, for 72 h. After following the general work-up process, crude product was obtained. From the ¹H-NMR of the crude product, it was noticed that only <2% of the starting material **18** was converted to product **19**. No attempt was made to isolate this product, but column chromatography (2% diethyl ether in petroleum ether) of the crude product provided an excellent recovery of starting material **18** (92%).

(c) With 8 under no photoactivation



The general procedure for blank reactions was applied to 2,2-diundecylmalononitrile **18** (0.149 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.682 g, 2.4 mmol, 6 eq.) for 72 h. After following the general work-up process, crude product was obtained. From the ¹H-NMR of the crude product, it was noticed that only <5% of the starting material **18** was converted to product **19**. No attempt was made to isolate this product, but column chromatography (2% diethyl ether in petroleum ether) of the crude product provided an excellent recovery of starting material **18** (90%).

Optimisation of reaction conditions for UV-activated reduction of **18**

Table 1: Optimisation of reaction conditions for decyanation of malononitriles.

		18	→	19	18
	8 (equiv.)	Time (h)	Ratio ^a of 19/18	19^b (%)	
i	4	48	100/0	---	
ii	4	24	89/11	---	
iii	4	36	100/0	92%	

[a] From the ¹H-NMR of the crude product. [b] Isolated yields.

(i) Using 4 equivalents of **8** for 48 h

The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2,2-diundecylmalononitrile **18** (0.149 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.454 g, 1.6 mmol, 4 eq.) for 48 h. After following the general work-up process, crude product was obtained. From the ¹H-NMR of the crude product, it was observed that the starting material **18** was completely consumed and provided exclusively decyanated product **19**. No attempt was made to isolate this product **19**.

(ii) Using 4 equivalents of **8** for 24 h

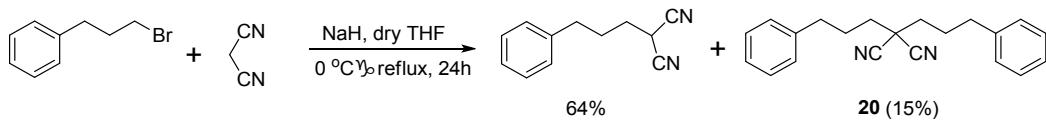
The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2,2-diundecylmalononitrile **18** (0.149 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.454 g, 1.6 mmol, 4 eq.) for 24 h. After following the general work-up process, crude product was obtained. From the ¹H-NMR of the crude product, it was observed that the starting material **18** was not completely consumed. The ratio of decyanated product **19** to starting material **18** in the crude product was found to be 89:11.

(iii) Using 4 equivalents of **8** for 36 h

The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2,2-diundecylmalononitrile **18** (0.149 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.454 g, 1.6 mmol, 4 eq.) for 36 h. After following the general work-up process, crude product was obtained. From the ¹H-NMR of the crude product, it was observed that the starting material **18** was completely consumed. Column chromatography (2% diethyl ether in petroleum ether) of the crude

product provided exclusively decyanated product **19** (92%). Spectral data of the product **19** were consistent with the previous data of the same compound.

Synthesis of 2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile⁶ and 2,2-bis(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile



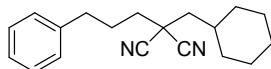
A solution of malononitrile (1.3212 g, 20 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.600 g, 15 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min at room temperature and (3-bromopropyl)benzene (2.986 g, 15 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 24 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (10% diethyl ether in hexane) to yield 2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile (1.753 g, 64%) as a colourless oil and 2,2-bis(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile **20** (0.680 g, 15%) as a white crystalline solid m.p. 78-80 °C.

For 2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile: [Found: (CI corona⁺) (M+H)⁺ 185.1071. C₁₂H₁₃N₂ (M+H) requires 185.1073]; $\nu_{\text{max}}(\text{film})/\text{cm}^{-1}$ 3026, 2922, 2866, 2240, 1602, 1496, 1454, 698; ¹H-NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.95-2.01 (2H, m, CHCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar), 2.02-2.07 (2H, m, CHCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar), 2.75 (2H, t, J = 7.0 Hz, ArCH₂), 3.67 (1H, t, J = 7.0 Hz, CH(CN)₂), 7.19 (2H, d, J = 7.0 Hz, ArH), 7.25 (1H, t, J = 7.0 Hz, ArH), 7.33 (2H, t, J = 7.0 Hz, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 22.6 (CH), 28.1 (CH₂), 30.2 (CH₂), 34.5 (CH₂), 112.6 (C), 126.7 (CH), 128.4 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 140.0 (C); *m/z* (CI corona⁺) 185 [(M+H)⁺, 100%], 141 (4).

For 2,2-bis(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile **20**: [Found: (CI corona⁺) (M+H)⁺ 303.1853. C₂₁H₂₃N₂ (M+H) requires 303.1856]; $\nu_{\text{max}}(\text{film})/\text{cm}^{-1}$ 3026, 2926, 2860, 2245, 1600, 1496, 1452, 702; ¹H-NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.88-1.91 (4H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar), 1.97-2.03 (4H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar), 2.72 (4H, t, J = 7.0 Hz, ArCH₂), 7.17 (4H, d, J = 7.0 Hz, ArH), 7.23 (2H, t, J = 7.5 Hz, ArH), 7.31 (4H, t, J = 7.5 Hz, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ

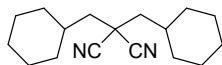
27.1 (CH₂), 34.9 (CH₂), 37.2 (CH₂), 37.7 (C), 115.7 (C), 126.6 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 140.2 (C); *m/z* (CI corona⁺) 303 [(M+H)⁺, 100%], 191 (4).

Synthesis of 2-(cyclohexylmethyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile **21**



A solution of 2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile (0.460 g, 2.5 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.120 g, 3 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min at room temperature and (bromomethyl)cyclohexane (0.531 g, 3 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 24 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (10% diethyl ether in hexane) to yield 2-(cyclohexylmethyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile **21** (0.562 g, 80%) as a white solid m.p. 36-38 °C. [Found: (CI corona⁺) (M+H)⁺ 281.2013. C₁₉H₂₅N₂ (M+H) requires 281.2012]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 3062, 3028, 2933, 2856, 2245, 1602, 1494, 1448, 1028, 727; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.01-1.36 (5H, m, Cy), 1.56-1.79 (6H, m, Cy), 1.89-1.96 (4H, m, CCH₂Cy, ArCH₂CH₂CH₂C), 1.99-2.08 (2H, m, ArCH₂CH₂CH₂C), 2.74 (2H, t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, ArCH₂), 7.19-7.25 (3H, m, ArH), 7.32 (2H, t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 25.9 (2 x CH₂), 26.0 (CH₂), 27.0 (CH₂), 33.5 (2 x CH₂), 34.9 (CH), 35.7 (CH₂), 35.9 (C), 38.7 (CH₂), 44.8 (CH₂), 116.1 (C), 126.6 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 140.3 (C); *m/z* (CI corona⁺) 281 [(M+H)⁺, 100%], 256 [(M-CN)+H]⁺, 6%], 203 (7).

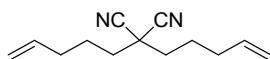
Synthesis of 2,2-bis(cyclohexylmethyl)malononitrile **22**⁷



A solution of malononitrile (0.330 g, 5 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to a suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.440 g, 11 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min at room temperature and (bromomethyl)cyclohexane (1.77 g, 10 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL)

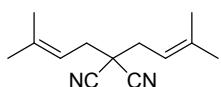
was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 24 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (5% diethyl ether in petroleum ether) to yield 2,2-bis(cyclohexylmethyl)malononitrile **22**⁷ (0.880 g, 68%) as a white solid m.p. 88-90 °C (lit.:⁷ 90-92 °C). [Found: (CI corona⁺) (M+H)⁺ 259.2166. C₁₇H₂₇N₂ (M+H) requires 259.2169]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 2918, 2848, 2242, 1446, 842; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.04-1.23 (6H, m, Cy), 1.27-1.39 (4H, m, Cy), 1.66-1.82 (12H, m, Cy), 1.92-1.96 (4H, m, CyCH₂C); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 25.98 (CH₂), 26.01 (CH₂), 33.6 (CH₂), 34.2 (C), 35.6 (CH), 46.2 (CH₂), 116.6 (C); *m/z* (CI corona⁺) 517 [(2M+H)⁺, 32%], 492 (13), 467 (16), 303 (29), 259 [(M+H)⁺, 100%], 234 (69).

Synthesis of 2,2-di(pent-4-en-1-yl)malononitrile **23**⁸



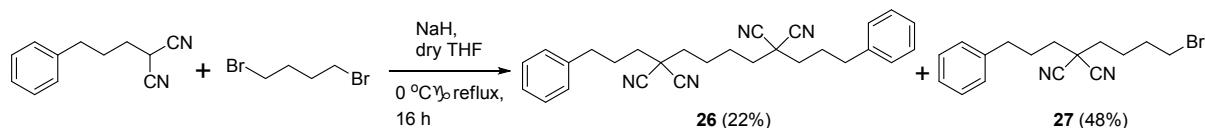
A solution of malononitrile (0.330 g, 5 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to a suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.440 g, 11 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min at room temperature and 5-bromopent-1-ene (1.6392 g, 11 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 24 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (5% diethyl ether in hexane) to yield 2,2-di(pent-4-en-1-yl)malononitrile **23** (0.726 g, 72%) as a colourless oil. [Found: (CI corona⁺) (M+H)⁺ 203.1542. C₁₃H₁₉N₂ (M+H) requires 203.1543]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 3080, 2933, 2866, 2241, 1641, 1460, 914; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.75-1.83 (4H, m, =CHCH₂CH₂CH₂), 1.91-1.96 (4H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂), 2.16-2.21 (4H, m, =CHCH₂CH₂CH₂), 5.04-5.11 (4H, m, CH₂=CHCH₂), 5.73-5.83 (2H, m, CH₂=CHCH₂); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 24.7 (CH₂), 32.7 (CH₂), 37.2 (CH₂), 37.7 (C), 115.7 (C), 116.4 (CH₂), 136.7 (CH); *m/z* (CI corona⁺) 203 [(M+H)⁺, 100%], 178 (16).

Synthesis of 2,2-bis(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malononitrile 25



A solution of malononitrile (0.397 g, 6 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to a suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.528 g, 13.2 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min at room temperature and 1-bromo-3-methylbut-2-ene (1.967 g, 13.2 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 16 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (5% ethyl acetate in petroleum ether) to yield 2,2-bis(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malononitrile **25** (1.047 g, 86%) as a white solid m.p. 62-64 °C. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.73 (6H, s, =CH₃), 1.83 (6H, s, CH₃), 2.66 (4H, d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, =CHCH₂), 5.27-5.32 (2H, m, =CHCH₂); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 18.4 (CH₃), 26.1 (CH₃), 35.7 (CH₂), 38.2 (C), 114.9 (CH), 115.9 (C), 140.5 (C).

Synthesis of 1,12-diphenyldodecane-4,4,9,9-tetracarbonitrile 26 and 2-(4-bromobutyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile 27



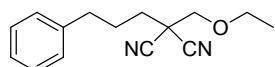
A solution of 2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile (0.552 g, 3 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.132 g, 3.3 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min at room temperature and 1,4-dibromobutane (0.712 g, 3.3 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 16 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (20% diethyl ether in petroleum ether) to yield 1,12-diphenyldodecane-

4,4,9,9-tetracarbonitrile **26** (0.280 g, 22%) and 2-(4-bromobutyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl) malononitrile **27** (0.462 g, 48%) as a white solid (m.p. 128-130 °C) and a thick colourless oil, respectively.

For 12-diphenyldodecane-4,4,9,9-tetracarbonitrile **26**: [Found: (Cl corona⁺) (M+NH₄)⁺ 440.2817. C₂₈H₃₄N₅ (M+ NH₄) requires 440.2809]; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.73-1.77 (4H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂CH₂C), 1.91-1.97 (8H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂CH₂C, ArCH₂CH₂CH₂C), 1.99-2.07 (4H, m, ArCH₂CH₂CH₂C), 2.75 (4H, t, J = 7.2 Hz, ArCH₂CH₂CH₂C), 7.19 (4H, d, J = 6.8 Hz, ArH), 7.22-7.26 (2H, m, ArH), 7.33 (4H, t, J = 7.2 Hz, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 25.0 (CH₂), 27.1 (CH₂), 34.8 (CH₂), 37.2 (CH₂), 37.4 (C), 37.6 (CH₂), 115.4 (C), 126.6 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 140.1 (C); *m/z* (Cl corona⁺) 440 [(M+ NH₄)⁺, 100%], 408 (20), 311 (22), 282 (34), 136 (16).

For 2-(4-bromobutyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl) malononitrile **27**: [Found: (Cl corona⁺) (M+NH₄)⁺ 336.1070. C₁₆H₂₃N₃Br (M+NH₄) requires 336.1070]; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.79-1.88 (2H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂CH₂Br), 1.91-2.08 (8H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂CH₂Br, ArCH₂CH₂CH₂), 2.76 (2H, t, J = 7.2 Hz, ArCH₂), 3.43 (2H, t, J = 6.4 Hz, ArCH₂), 7.19-7.21 (2H, m, ArH), 7.21-7.26 (1H, m, ArH), 7.30-7.35 (2H, m, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 24.3 (CH₂), 27.1 (CH₂), 31.7 (CH₂), 32.2 (CH₂), 34.8 (CH₂), 36.9 (CH₂), 37.1 (CH₂), 37.6 (C), 115.5 (C), 126.6 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 140.2 (C); *m/z* (Cl corona⁺) 338 [(M+NH₄)⁺, ⁸¹Br, 98%], 336 [(M+NH₄)⁺, ⁷⁹Br, 100%], 316 (27), 256 (30), 159 (10).

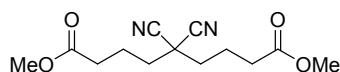
Synthesis of 2-(ethoxymethyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile **29**



A solution of 2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile (0.736 g, 4 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to a suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.176 g, 4.4 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min at room temperature and (chloromethoxy)ethane (0.453 g, 4.8 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 16 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried

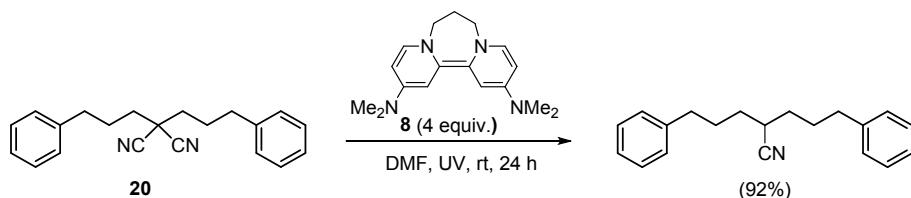
over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (10% ethyl acetate in petroleum ether) to yield 2-(ethoxymethyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile **29** (0.621 g, 64%) as a light yellow oil. ¹H-NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.25 (3H, t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, OCH₂CH₃), 1.96-2.05 (4H, m, ArCH₂CH₂CH₂C), 2.76 (2H, t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, ArCH₂), 3.67 (2H, q, *J* = 7.0 Hz, OCH₂CH₃), 3.75 (2H, s, CCH₂OCH₂CH₃), 7.20 (2H, d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, ArH), 7.24 (1H, t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, ArH), 7.32 (2H, t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 14.9 (CH₃), 26.9 (CH₂), 33.6 (CH₂), 34.9 (CH₂), 38.6 (C), 68.2 (CH₂), 72.2 (CH₂), 114.6 (C), 126.5 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.8 (CH), 140.3 (C).

Synthesis of dimethyl 5,5-dicyanononananedioate **30**



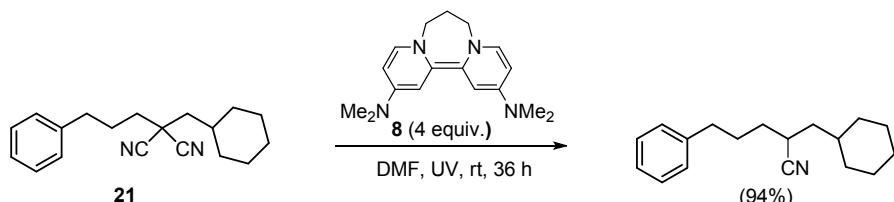
A solution of malononitrile (0.330 g, 5 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.440 g, 11 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min at room temperature and methyl 4-bromobutanoate (1.9914 g, 11 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 24 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (25% ethyl acetate in hexane) to yield *dimethyl 5,5-dicyanononananedioate* **30** (0.935 g, 70%) as a colourless oil. [Found: (ESI⁺) (M+NH₄)⁺ 284.1609. C₁₃H₂₂N₃O₄ (M+NH₄) requires 284.1605]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 2954, 2360, 2328, 1730, 1436, 1259, 1170; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.97-2.06 (8H, m, CH₂CH₂CO₂CH₃), 2.47 (4H, t, *J* = 6.0 Hz, CCH₂), 3.71 (6H, s, CO₂CH₃); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 20.8 (CH₂), 32.6 (CH₂), 36.6 (CH₂), 37.2 (C), 51.9 (CH₃), 115.2 (C), 172.5 (C=O); *m/z* (ESI⁺) 284 [(M+NH₄)⁺, 100%], 267 [(M+H)⁺, 4%], 199 (4).

UV-activated reduction of 2,2-bis(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile 20



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2,2-bis(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile **20** (0.121 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.454 g, 1.6 mmol, 4 eq.) for 24 h. After following the general work-up process, column chromatography (2% ethyl acetate in hexane) provided *5-phenyl-2-(3-phenylpropyl)pentanenitrile* (0.1025 g, 92%) as a colourless oil. [Found: (CI corona⁺) (M+H)⁺ 278.1905. C₂₀H₂₄N (M+H) requires 278.1903]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 3026, 2941, 2860, 2235, 1602, 1494, 1452, 696; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.52-1.80 (6H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar), 1.83-1.94 (2H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar), 2.49-2.56 (1H, m, CHCN), 2.65 (4H, t, J = 7.6 Hz, ArCH₂), 7.16-7.23 (6H, m, ArH), 7.30 (4H, t, J = 7.6 Hz, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 28.9 (CH₂), 31.6 (CH), 31.8 (CH₂), 35.4 (CH₂), 122.2 (C), 126.2 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.6 (CH), 141.4 (C); *m/z* (CI corona⁺) 278 [(M+H)⁺, 100%], 249 (15), 203 (13), 95 (16).

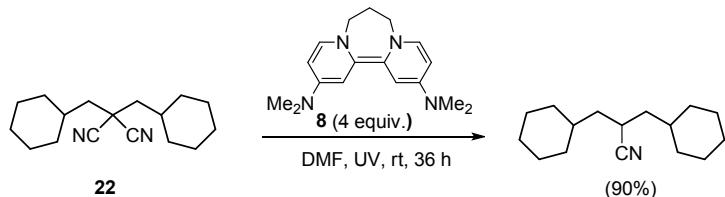
UV-activated reduction of 2-(cyclohexylmethyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile 21



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2-(cyclohexylmethyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile **21** (0.112 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.454 g, 1.6 mmol, 4 eq.) for 36 h. After following the general work-up process, column chromatography (2% diethyl ether in hexane) provided 2-(cyclohexylmethyl)-5-phenylpentanenitrile (0.096 g, 94%) as a white solid m.p. 46-48 °C. [Found: (CI corona⁺) (M+H)⁺ 256.2060. C₁₈H₂₆N (M+H) requires 256.2060]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 3026, 2920, 2850, 2235, 1602, 1496, 1448, 698; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 0.82-0.95 (2H, m, Cy), 1.12-1.35 (4H, m, Cy), 1.44-1.90 (11H, m, Cy, CHCH₂Cy, ArCH₂CH₂CH₂CH), 2.58-2.65 (1H, m, CHCN), 2.68 (2H, t, J = 7.2 Hz, ArCH₂), 7.18-7.22 (3H, m, ArH), 7.30 (2H, t, J = 7.6 Hz, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 26.0 (CH₂), 26.1 (CH₂), 26.5 (CH₂), 28.9 (CH₂), 29.0 (CH₂), 32.3 (CH), 32.5 (CH₂), 33.7 (CH₂), 35.4 (CH₂), 35.5 (CH₂), 40.0 (CH), 122.5 (C),

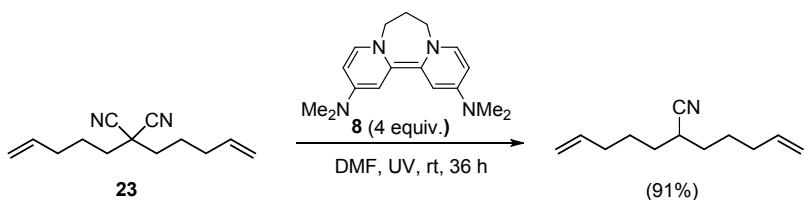
126.1 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.6 (CH), 141.5 (C); *m/z* (CI corona⁺) 256 [(M+H)⁺, 100%], 249 (8), 95 (9).

UV-activated reduction of 2,2-bis(cyclohexylmethyl)malononitrile 22



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2,2-bis(cyclohexylmethyl)malononitrile **22** (0.103 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.454 g, 1.6 mmol, 4 eq.) for 36 h. After following the general work-up process, column chromatography (2% diethyl ether in hexane) provided *3-cyclohexyl-2-(cyclohexylmethyl)propanenitrile* (0.0836 g, 90%) as a white solid m.p. 30-32 °C. [Found: (CI corona⁺) ($M+H$)⁺ 234.2212. $C_{16}H_{28}N$ ($M+H$) requires 234.2216]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 2920, 2846, 2235, 1450, 842; ¹H-NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 0.82-0.99 (4H, m, Cy), 1.11-1.35 (8H, m, Cy), 1.44-1.58 (4H, m, Cy), 1.65-1.80 (10H, m, Cy, CyCH₂CH), 2.65-2.71 (1H, m, CHCN); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 26.1 (CH₂), 26.2 (CH₂), 26.4 (CH), 26.5 (CH₂), 32.5 (CH₂), 33.7 (CH₂), 35.5 (CH), 40.5 (CH₂), 122.9 (C); *m/z* (CI corona⁺) 251 [(M+NH₄)⁺, 10%], 234 [(M+H)⁺, 100%], 195 (7).

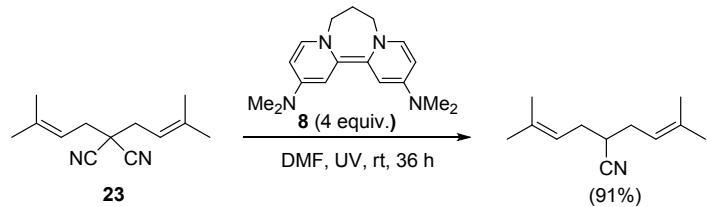
UV-activated reduction of 2,2-di(pent-4-en-1-yl)malononitrile 23



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2,2-bis(cyclohexylmethyl)malononitrile **23** (0.101 g, 0.5 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.568 g, 2.0 mmol, 4 eq.) for 36 h. After following the general work-up process, column chromatography (2% diethyl ether in hexane) provided 2-(pent-4-en-1-yl)hept-6-enenitrile (0.0806 g, 91%) as a colourless oil. [Found: (CI corona⁺) (M+H)⁺ 178.1587. C₁₂H₂₀N (M+H) requires 178.1590]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 3078, 2931, 2862, 2237, 1641, 1460, 910; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.53-1.69 (8H, m, =CHCH₂CH₂CH₂, =CHCH₂CH₂CH₂), 2.08-2.13 (4H, m, =CHCH₂CH₂CH₂), 2.50-2.57 (1H, m, CHCN), 4.98-5.07 (4H, m, CH₂=CHCH₂), 5.74-5.84 (2H, m, CH₂=CHCH₂); ¹³C-NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 26.4 (CH₂), 31.5 (CH), 31.7 (CH₂),

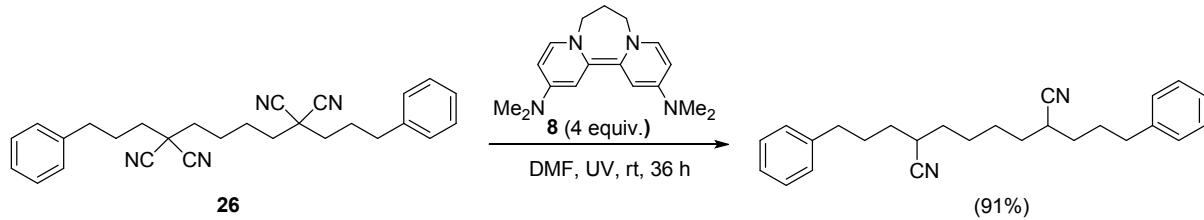
33.2 (CH_2), 115.4 (CH_2), 122.3 (C), 137.8 (CH); m/z (CI corona $^+$) 195 [$(\text{M}+\text{NH}_4)^+$, 11%], 178 [$(\text{M}+\text{H})^+$, 100%], 117 (14).

UV-activated reduction of 2,2-bis(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malononitrile 25



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2,2-bis(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)malononitrile **25** (0.0809 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.454 g, 1.6 mmol, 4 eq.) for 36 h. After following the general work-up process, column chromatography (5% ethyl acetate in petroleum ether) provided 5-methyl-2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)hex-4-enenitrile (0.064 g, 90%) as a colourless oil. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.65 (6H, s, =(CH₃)(CH₃), 1.75 (6H, s, =(CH₃)(CH₃), 2.24-2.36 (4H, m, =CHCH₂), 2.48-2.55 (1H, m, CHCN), 5.16-5.20 (2H, m, =CHCH₂); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 18.1 (CH₃), 25.9 (CH₃), 30.3 (CH₂), 32.5 (CH), 119.3 (CH), 122.4 (C), 135.9 (C).

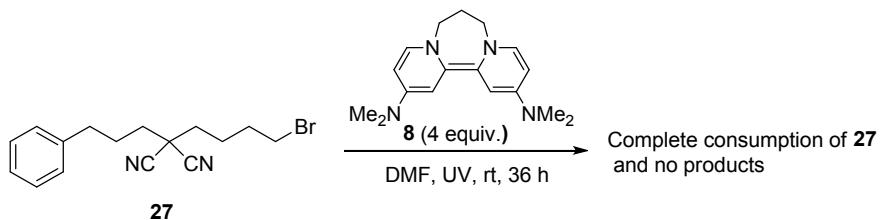
UV-activated reduction 1,12-diphenyldodecane-4,4,9,9-tetracarbonitrile 26



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 1,12-diphenyldodecane-4,4,9,9-tetracarbonitrile **26** (0.1266 g, 0.3 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.341 g, 1.2 mmol, 4 eq.) for 36 h. After following the general work-up process, column chromatography (10% ethyl acetate in petroleum ether) provided 2,7-bis(3-phenylpropyl)octanedinitrile (0.102 g, 91%) as a colourless oil. [Found: (CI corona⁺) ($M+H$)⁺ 373.2640. $C_{26}H_{33}N_2$ ($M+H$) requires 373.2638]; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ 1.41-1.70 (12H, m, $HCCH_2CH_2CH_2CH_2CH$, $ArCH_2CH_2CH_2CH$), 1.72-1.81 (2H, m, $ArCH_2CH_2CH_2CH$), 1.83-1.96 (2H, m, $ArCH_2CH_2CH_2CH$), 2.49-2.55 (2H, m, *CHCN*), 2.67 (4H, t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, $ArCH_2$), 7.18-7.23 (6H, m, ArH), 7.29-7.33 (4H, m, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, $CDCl_3$) δ 26.8 (CH_2), 26.9 (CH_2), 28.9 (2 x CH_2), 31.7 (2 x CH), 31.8 (CH_2), 31.84 (CH_2), 32.07

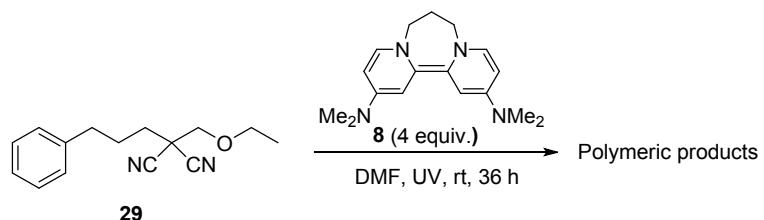
(CH₂), 32.11 (CH₂), 35.4 (2 x CH₂), 122.0 (C), 126.2 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 128.6 (CH), 141.4 (C); *m/z* (CI corona⁺) 390 [(M+NH₄)⁺, 44%], 373 [(M+H)⁺, 83%], 311 (70), 260 (100), 183 (35), 134 (29).

UV-activated reduction of 2-(4-bromobutyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile 27



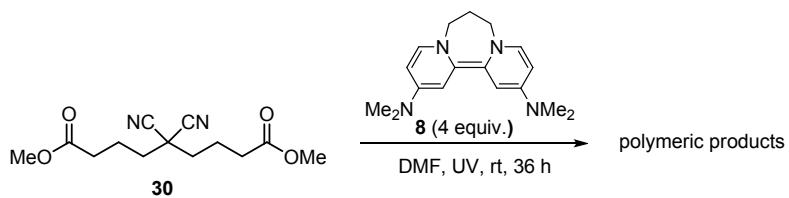
The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2-(4-bromobutyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile **27** (0.159 g, 0.5 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.568 g, 2.0 mmol, 4 eq.) for 36 h. After following the general work-up process, nothing was recovered from the organic phase.

UV-activated reduction of 2-(ethoxymethyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile 29



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2-(ethoxymethyl)-2-(3-phenylpropyl)malononitrile **29** (0.969 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.454 g, 1.6 mmol, 4 eq.) for 36 h. After following the general work-up process, crude product was obtained. ¹H-NMR of the crude product and TLC showed that the reaction led to a very complex mixture of products. No attempt was made to isolate these products.

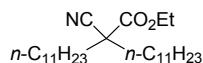
UV-activated reduction of dimethyl 5,5-dicyanononanedioate 30



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to dimethyl 5,5-dicyanononanedioate **30** (0.106 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.454 g, 1.6

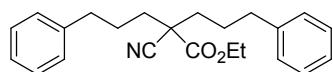
mmol, 4 eq.) for 36 h. After following the general work-up process, crude product was obtained. ¹H-NMR of the crude product and TLC showed that the reaction led to a very complex mixture of polymeric products. No attempt was made to isolate these products.

Synthesis of ethyl 2-cyano-2-undecyltridecanoate 31



A solution of ethyl 2-cyanoacetate (0.452 g, 4 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to a suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.352 g, 8.8 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min at room temperature and 1-bromoundecane (2.069 g, 8.8 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 24 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (10% diethyl ether in hexane) to yield *ethyl 2-cyano-2-undecyltridecanoate 31* (0.896 g, 53%) as a colourless oil. [Found: (ESI⁺) (M+NH₄)⁺ 439.4255. C₂₇H₅₅N₂O₂ (M+NH₄) requires 439.4258]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 2953, 2922, 2852, 2237, 1741, 1463, 1377, 1217, 1022, 721; ¹H-NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 0.89 [6H, t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, (CH₂)₁₀CH₃], 1.26-1.35 (37H, m, CH₃(CH₂)₉, (CH₂)₈CH₃, CO₂CH₂CH₃), 1.54-1.58 (2H, m, CH₂(CH₂)₈CH₃), 1.74-1.79 (2H, m, CCH₂(CH₂)₉CH₃), 1.86-1.92 (2H, m, CCH₂(CH₂)₉CH₃), 4.27 (2H, q, *J* = 7.5 Hz, CO₂CH₂CH₃); ¹³C-NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 14.25 (CH₃), 14.28 (CH₃), 22.8 (CH₂), 25.4 (CH₂), 29.4 (2 x CH₂), 29.5 (CH₂), 29.6 (CH₂), 29.7 (2 x CH₂), 32.1 (CH₂), 37.7 (CH₂), 50.2 (C), 62.6 (CH₂), 119.7 (C), 169.5 (C=O); *m/z* (ESI⁺) 860 [(2M+NH₄)⁺, 7%], 439 [(M+NH₄)⁺, 100%], 351 (16), 268 (28).

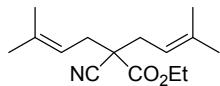
Synthesis of ethyl 2-cyano-5-phenyl-2-(3-phenylpropyl)pentanoate 33



A solution of ethyl 2-cyanoacetate (0.565 g, 5 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.440 g, 11 mmol) in dry

tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min. at room temperature and (3-bromopropyl)benzene (2.1898 g, 11 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 24 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (10% diethyl ether in hexane) to yield *ethyl 2-cyano-5-phenyl-2-(3-phenylpropyl)pentanoate* **33** (1.220 g, 70%) as a colourless oil. [Found: (ESI⁺) (M+NH₄)⁺ 367.2384. C₂₃H₃₁N₂O₂ (M+NH₄) requires 367.2380]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 3026, 2935, 2864, 2240, 1737, 1452, 1219, 1182, 1095, 1018, 698; ¹H-NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.29 [3H, t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, CO₂CH₂CH₃], 1.59-1.68 (2H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar), 1.77-1.82 (2H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar), 1.87-1.95 (4H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar), 2.65 (4H, t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, ArCH₂), 4.24 (2H, q, *J* = 7.0 Hz, CO₂CH₂CH₃), 7.16 (4H, d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, ArH), 7.20 (2H, t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, ArH), 7.29 (4H, t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 14.2 (CH₃), 27.0 (CH₂), 35.3 (CH₂), 36.9 (CH₂), 49.8 (C), 62.7 (CH₂), 119.3 (C), 126.2 (CH), 128.4 (CH), 128.6 (CH), 141.0 (C), 169.1 (C=O); *m/z* (ESI⁺) 367[(M+NH₄)⁺, 100%].

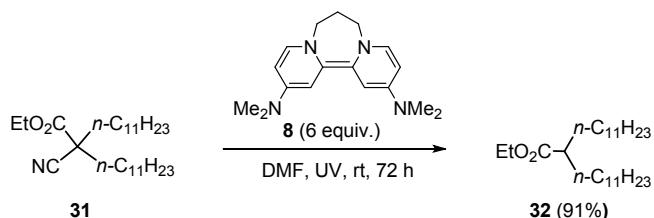
Synthesis of ethyl 2-cyano-5-methyl-2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)hex-4-enoate **34**



A solution of ethyl 2-cyanoacetate (0.678 g, 6 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly to suspension of sodium hydride (~60%, 0.528 g, 13.2 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at 0 °C under argon gas. The resulting solution was stirred for 15 min at room temperature and 1-bromo-3-methylbut-2-ene (1.967 g, 13.2 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (2 mL) was added slowly into the reaction flask. The reaction mixture was further stirred at reflux conditions for 16 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with water (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined organic phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (5% ethyl acetate in petroleum ether) to yield ethyl 2-cyano-5-methyl-2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)hex-4-enoate **34** (1.249 g, 83%) as a colourless oil. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.30 (3H, t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CO₂CH₂CH₃), 1.66 (6H, s, CH₃), 1.75 (6H, s, CH₃), 2.49-

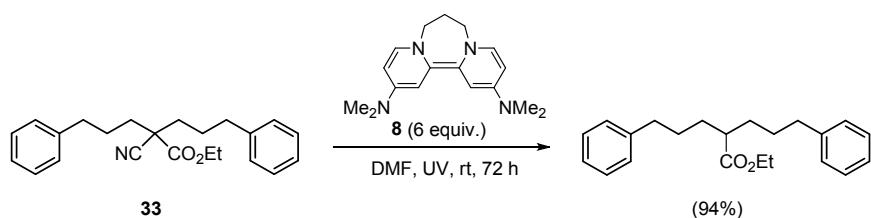
2.55 (2H, m, =CHCH₂), 2.59-2.65 (2H, m, =CHCH₂), 4.23 (2H, q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CO₂CH₂CH₃), 5.16-5.21 (2H, m, =CHCH₂); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 14.1 (CH₃), 18.1 (CH₃), 25.9 (CH₃), 35.3 (CH₂), 50.0 (C), 62.4 (CH₂), 116.7 (CH), 119.4 (C), 137.6 (C), 168.8 (C).

UV-activated reduction of ethyl 2-cyano-2-undecyltridecanoate 31



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to ethyl 2-cyano-2-undecyltridecanoate **31** (0.126 g, 0.3 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.511 g, 1.8 mmol, 6 eq.) for 72 h. After following the general work-up process, column chromatography (2% diethyl ether in petroleum ether) provided *ethyl 2-undecyltridecanoate* **32** (0.108 g, 91%) as a colourless oil. [Found: (Cl corona⁺) (M+H)⁺ 397.4041. C₂₆H₅₃O₂ (M+H) requires 397.4040]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 2922, 2852, 1734, 1463, 1377, 1155, 1033, 721; ¹H-NMR (500 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 0.89 [6H, t, *J* = 7.0 Hz, (CH₂)₁₀CH₃], 1.24-1.34 (37H, m, CH₃(CH₂)₉, (CH₂)₈CH₃, CO₂CH₂CH₃), 1.41-1.46 (2H, m, CH₂(CH₂)₈CH₃), 1.54-1.62 (4H, m, CH(CH₂)₂, 1.28-2.34 (1H, m, CHCO₂E_t), 4.14 (2H, q, *J* = 7.0 Hz, CO₂CH₂CH₃); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 14.2 (CH₃), 14.5 (CH₃), 22.8 (CH₂), 27.6 (CH₂), 29.5 (CH₂), 29.6 (CH₂), 29.7 (2 x CH₂), 29.8 (2 x CH₂), 32.1 (CH₂), 32.7 (CH₂), 45.9 (CH), 60.1 (CH₂), 176.8 (C=O); *m/z* (Cl corona⁺) 397 [(M+H)⁺, 100%], 327 (16), 243 (23), 229 (31), 201 (32), 155 (23).

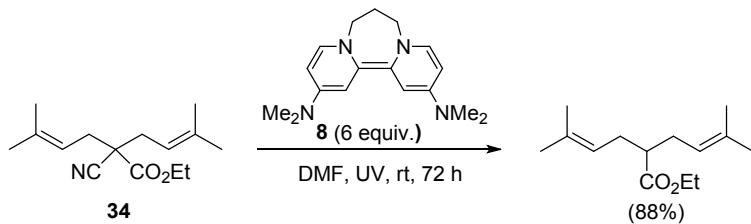
UV-activated reduction of ethyl 2-cyano-5-phenyl-2-(3-phenylpropyl)pentanoate 33



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to ethyl 2-cyano-5-phenyl-2-(3-phenylpropyl)pentanoate **33** (0.1396 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.682 g, 2.4 mmol, 6 eq.) for 72 h. After following the general work-up process, column chromatography (5% diethyl ether in hexane) provided *ethyl 5-phenyl-2-(3-*

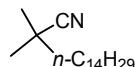
phenylpropyl)pentanoate (0.122 g, 94%) as a colourless oil. [Found: (ESI⁺) (M+H)⁺ 325.2169. C₂₂H₂₉O₂ (M+H) requires 325.2162]; ν_{max} (film)/cm⁻¹ 3024, 2937, 2858, 1728, 1494, 1452, 1184, 1149, 1028, 696; ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.24 [3H, t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CO₂CH₂CH₃], 1.45-1.53 (2H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar), 1.56-1.69 (6H, m, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar, CCH₂CH₂CH₂Ar), 2.35-2.41 (1H, m, CHCO₂Et), 2.60 (4H, t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, ArCH₂), 4.13 (2H, q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CO₂CH₂CH₃), 7.15-7.20 (6H, m, ArH), 7.26-7.30 (4H, m, ArH); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 14.5 (CH₃), 29.3 (CH₂), 32.2 (CH₂), 35.9 (CH₂), 45.6 (CH), 60.2 (CH₂), 125.9 (CH), 128.4 (CH), 128.5 (CH), 142.3 (C), 176.4 (C=O); *m/z* (ESI⁺) 342 [(M+NH₄)⁺, 100%], 325 [(M+H)⁺, 47%], 251 (3), 173 (5).

UV-activated reduction of ethyl 2-cyano-5-methyl-2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)hex-4-enoate **34**



The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to ethyl 2-cyano-5-methyl-2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)hex-4-enoate **34** (0.099 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.682 g, 2.4 mmol, 6 eq.) for 72 h. After following the general work-up process, column chromatography (5% ethyl acetate in petroleum ether) provided ethyl 5-methyl-2-(3-methylbut-2-en-1-yl)hex-4-enoate (0.064 g, 90%) as a colourless oil. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 1.24 (3H, t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CO₂CH₂CH₃), 1.61 (6H, s, =(CH₃)(CH₃), 1.69 (6H, s, =(CH₃)(CH₃), 2.15-2.21 (2H, m, =CHCH₂), 2.26-2.39 (3H, m, CHCN, =CHCH₂), 4.12 (2H, q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, CO₂CH₂CH₃), 5.06-5.10 (2H, m, =CHCH₂); ¹³C-NMR (125 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 14.4 (CH₃), 17.9 (CH₃), 25.9 (CH₃), 30.5 (CH₂), 46.4 (CH), 60.2 (CH₂), 121.5 (CH), 133.6 (CH), 175.9 (C=O).

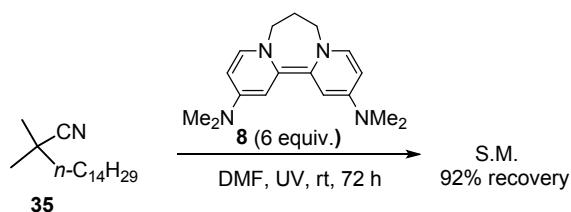
Synthesis of 2,2-dimethylhexadecanenitrile **35**



Lithium diisopropylamide (1.5 M in THF, 8 mL, 12 mmol) was added dropwise into a flask containing isobutyronitrile (0.691 g, 10 mmol) in dry THF (20 mL) at -78 °C under argon gas. The reaction contents were stirred for 1 h before adding 1-bromotetradecane dropwise

into the flask at -78 °C. Later, the reaction contents were allowed to warm to room temperature and stirred for 16 h under argon gas. At this point, the reaction was quenched with sat. NH₄Cl (15 mL) and extracted with diethyl ether (3 x 15 mL). The combined ether phases were washed once again with water (10 mL), brine solution (10 mL) and dried over anhydrous sodium sulfate. The concentrated solution was purified by column chromatography (5% diethyl ether in petroleum ether) to yield 2,2-dimethylhexadecanenitrile **35** (2.005 g, 76%) as a white solid m.p. 30-32 °C. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 0.89 (3H, t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, C₁₃H₂₆CH₃), 1.27-1.31 (22H, m, CH₂CH₂(CH₂)₁₁CH₃), 1.34 (6H, s, C(CH₃)₂); ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 14.2 (CH₃), 22.8 (CH₂), 25.4 (CH₂), 26.8 (2 x CH₂), 29.5 (CH₂), 29.6 (CH₂), 29.7 (CH₂), 29.77 (5 x CH₂), 29.81 (2 x CH₂), 32.1 (CH₂), 32.5 (CH₂), 115.7 (C); *m/z* (CI corona⁺) 203 [(M+H)⁺, 100%], 178 (16).

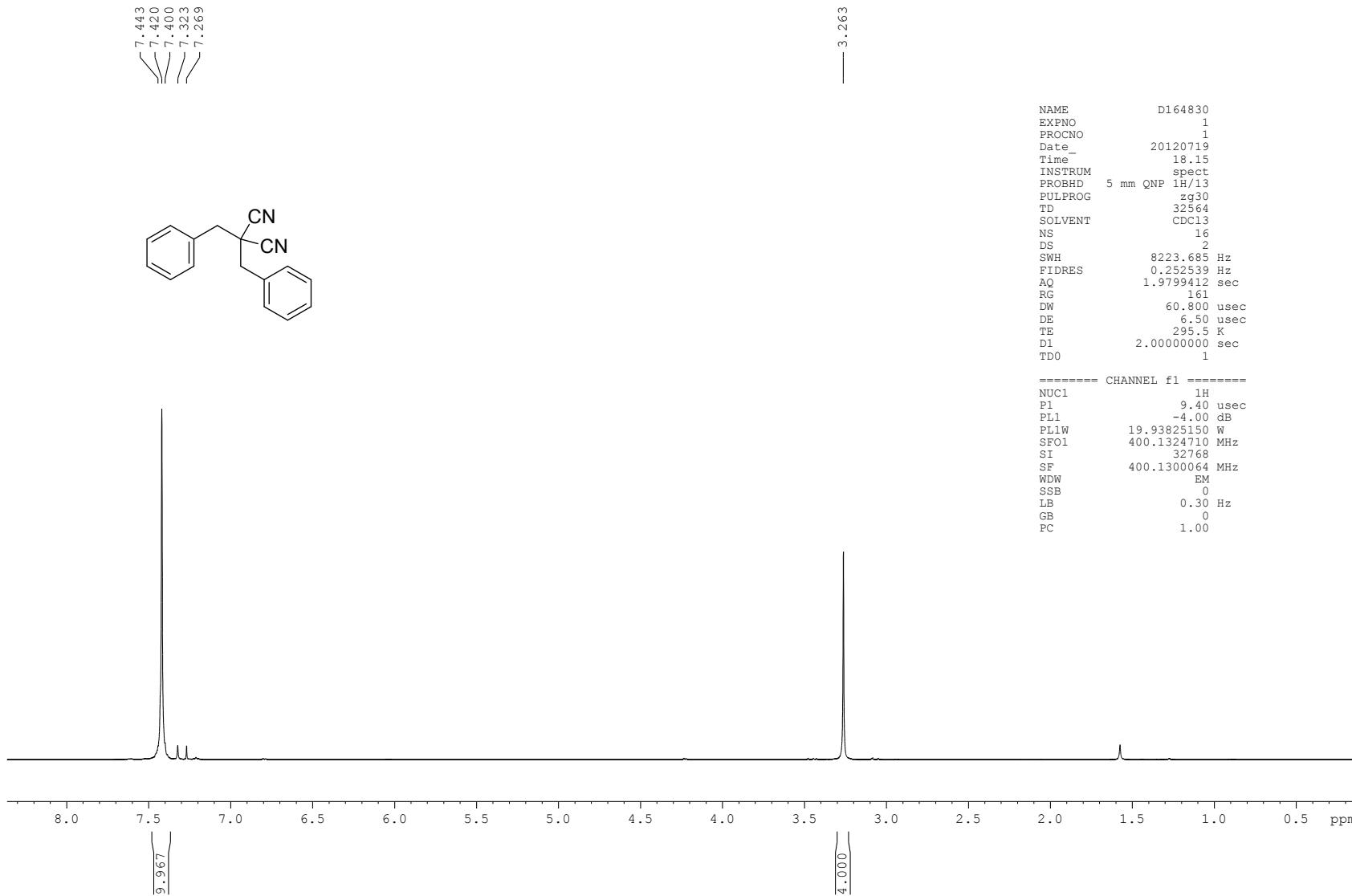
UV-activated reduction of 2,2-dimethylhexadecanenitrile **35**

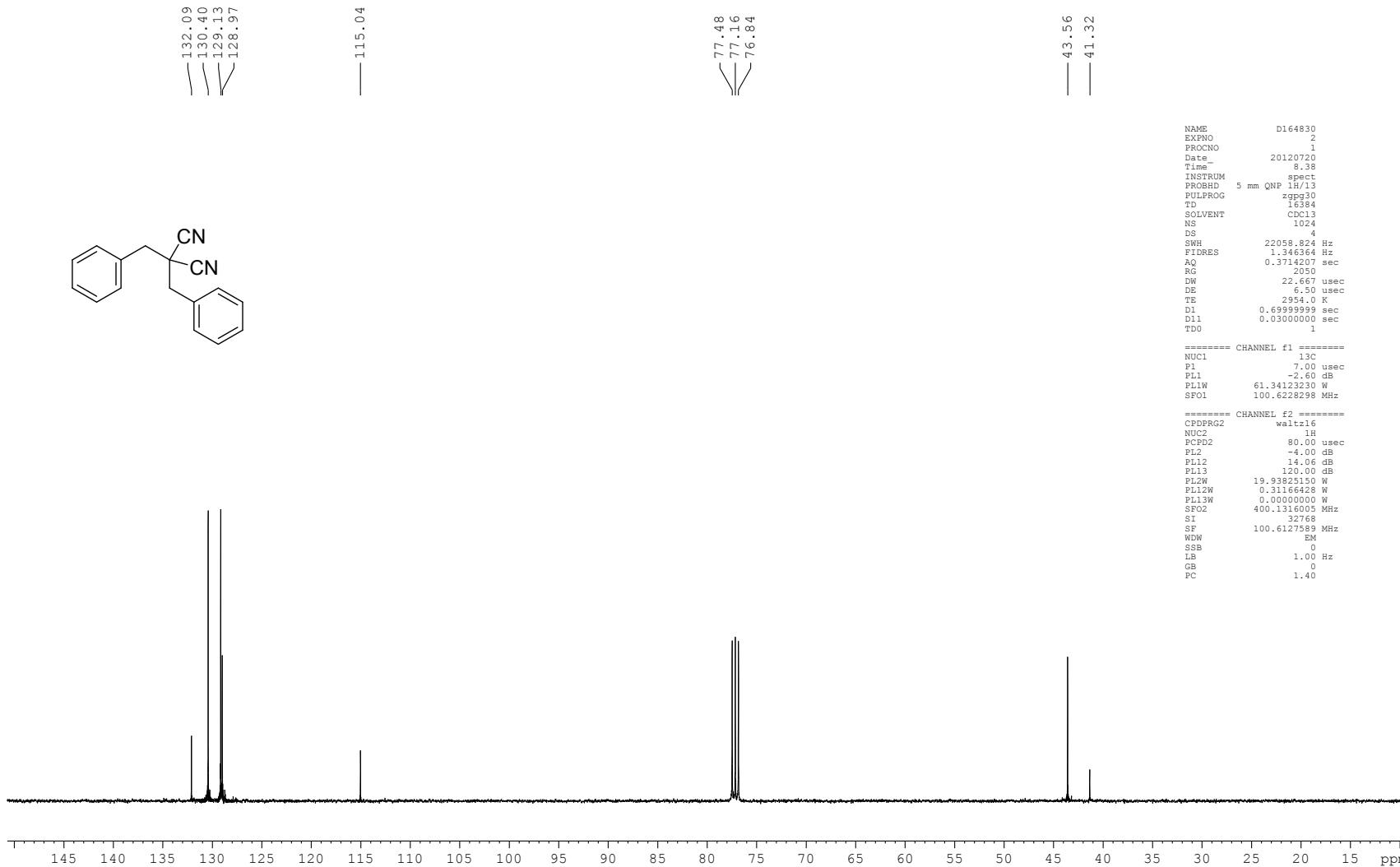


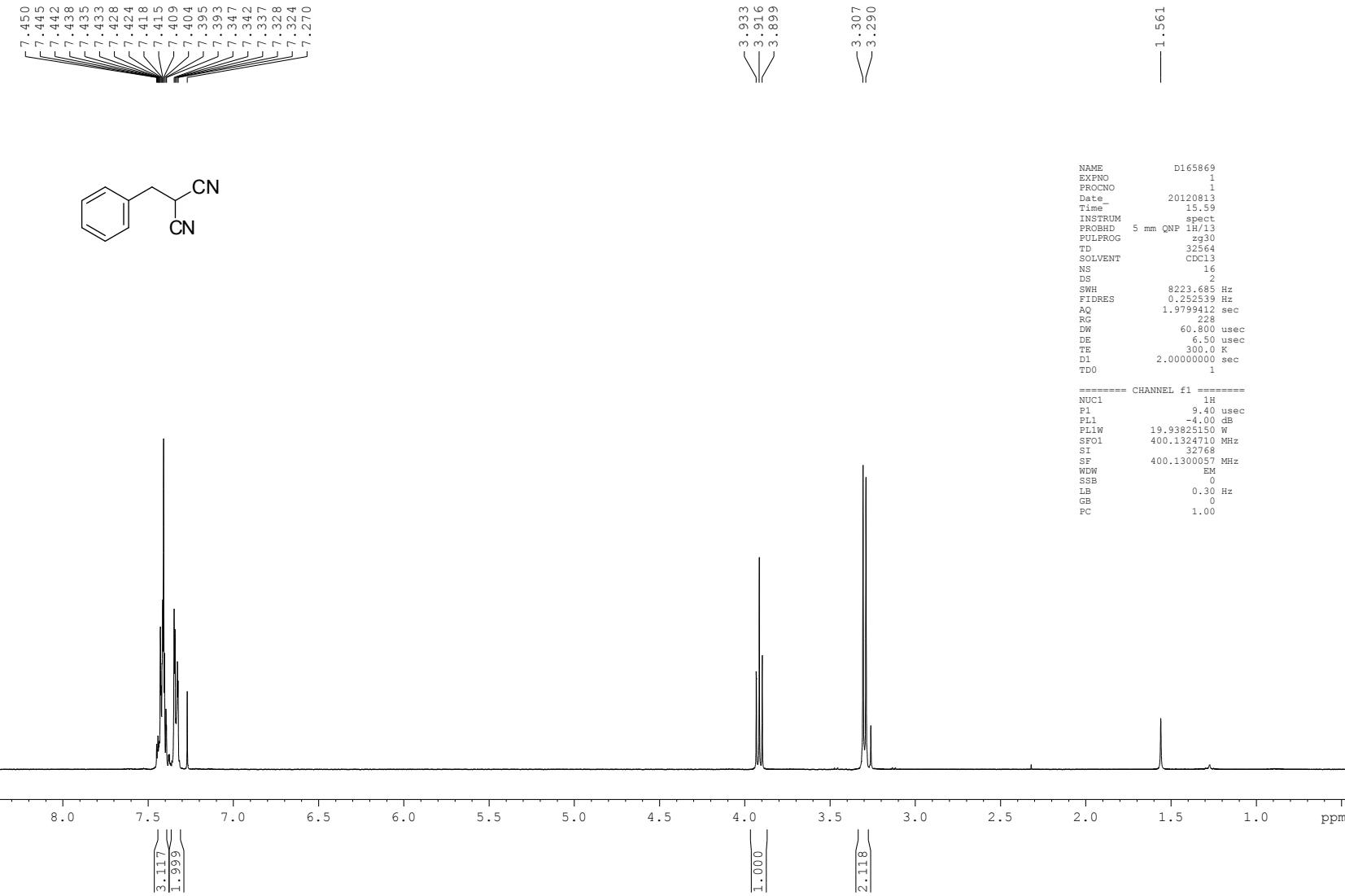
The general procedure for electron transfer reactions under UV conditions was applied to 2,2-dimethylhexadecanenitrile **35** (0.106 g, 0.4 mmol) using the donor **8** (0.682 g, 2.4 mmol, 6 eq.) for 72 h. After following the general work-up process, the reaction provided the recovery of starting material **35** (0.098 g, 92%) only.

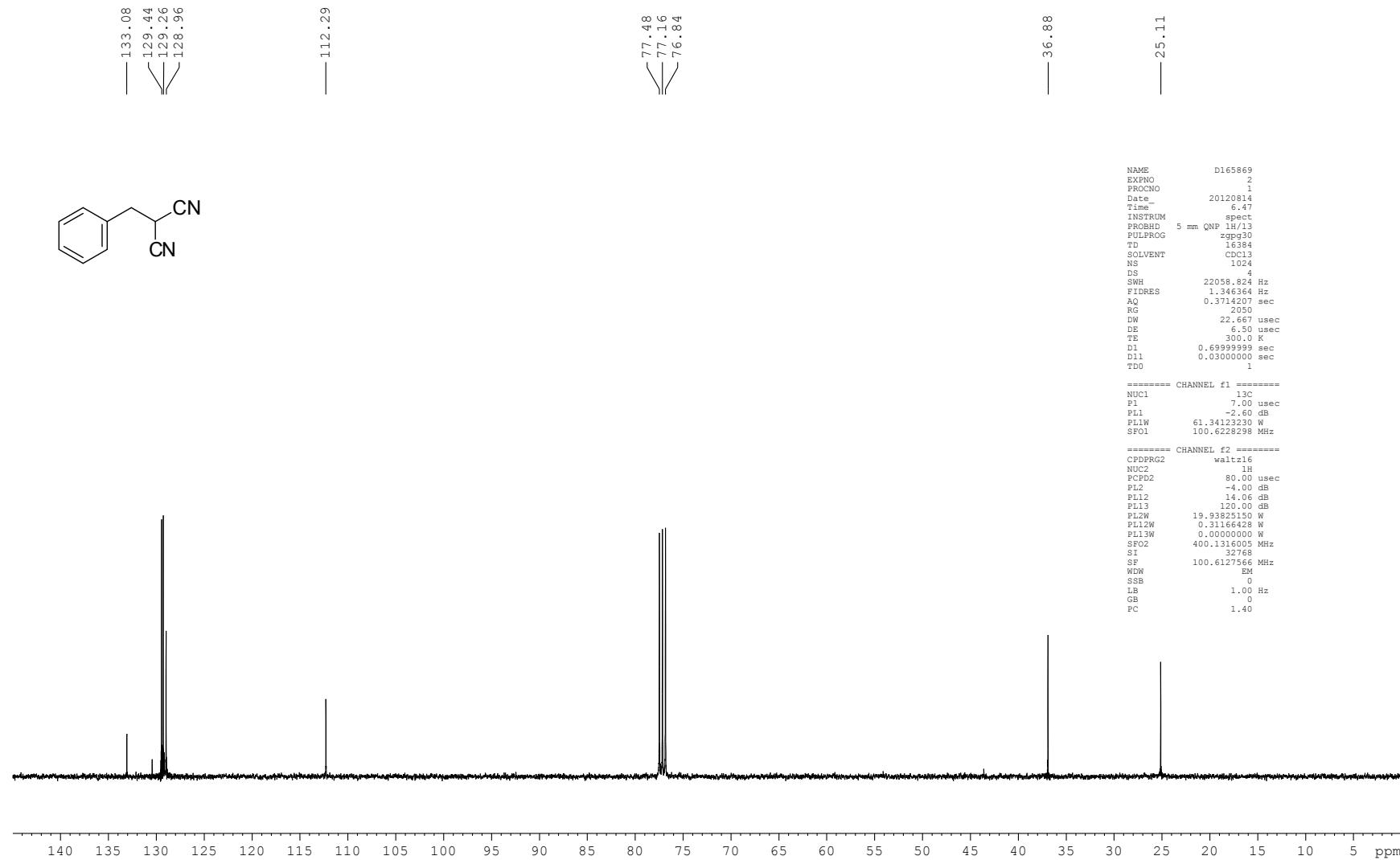
References

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8. D. P. Curran and C. M. Seong, *Synlett*, 1991, 107.



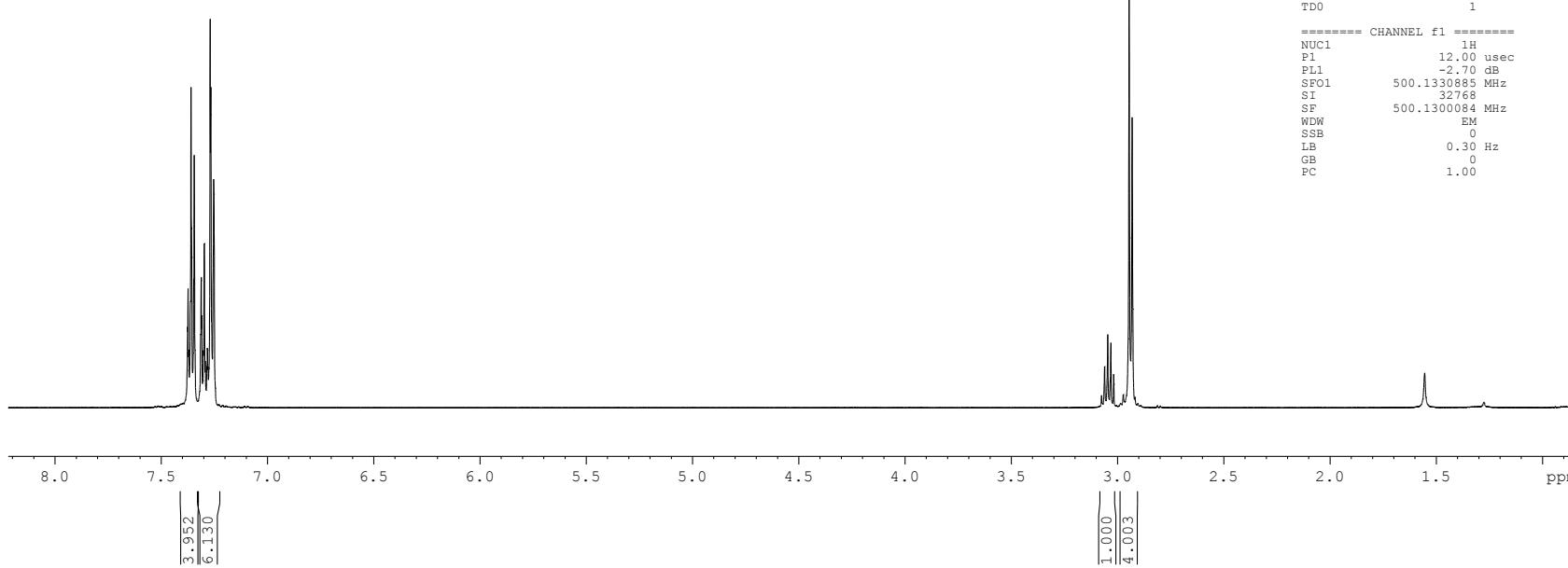
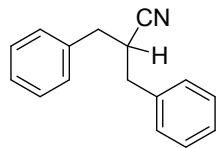






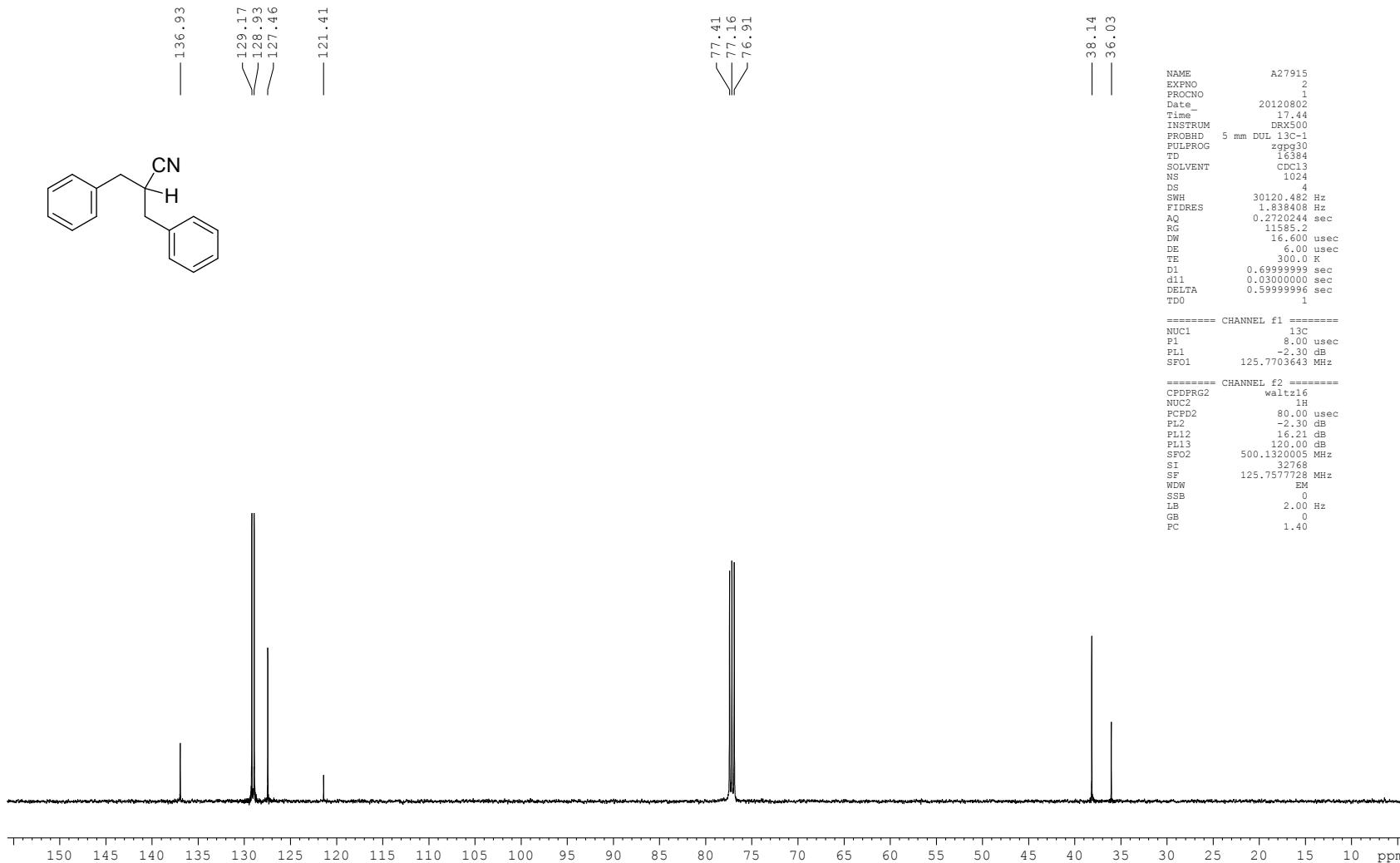
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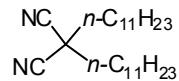


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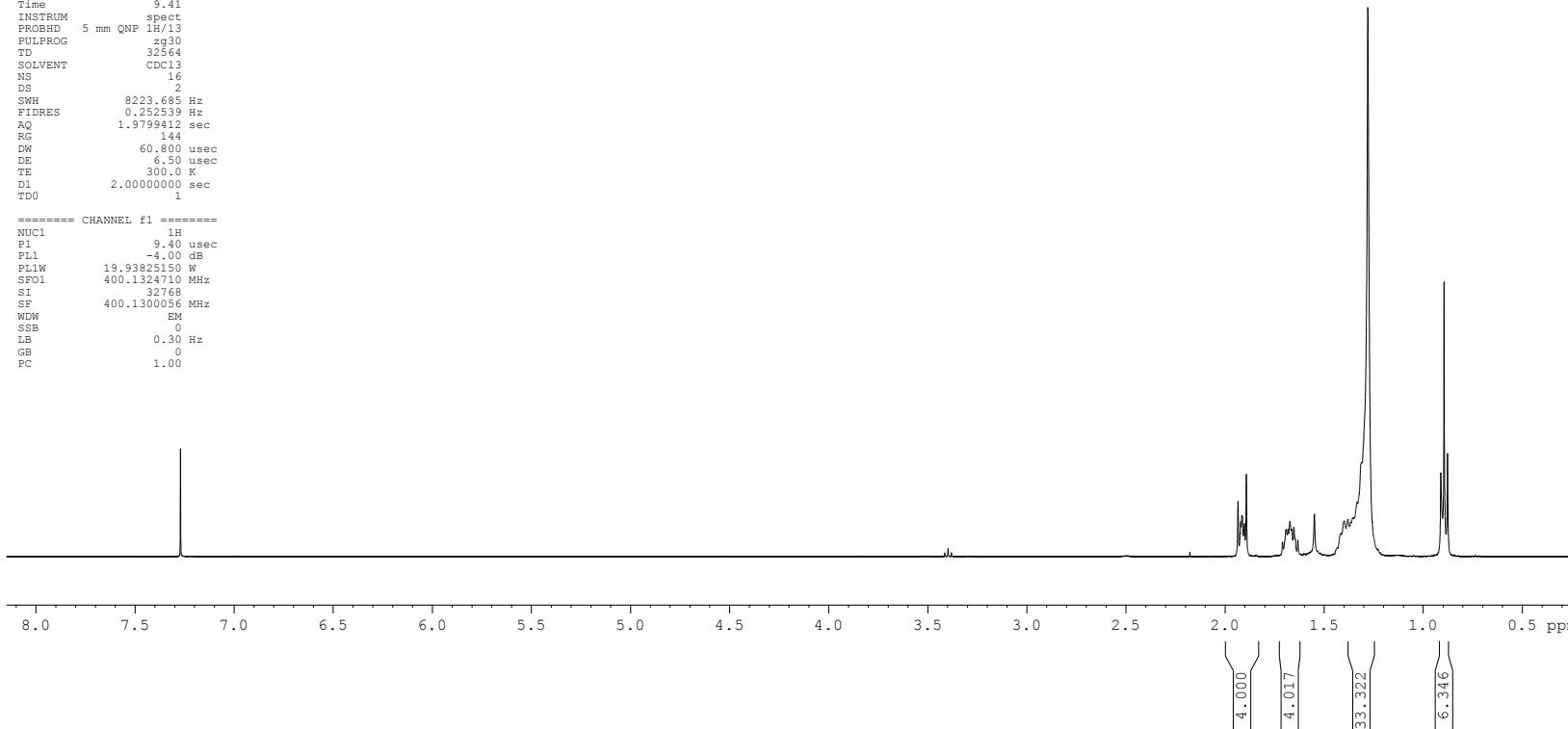
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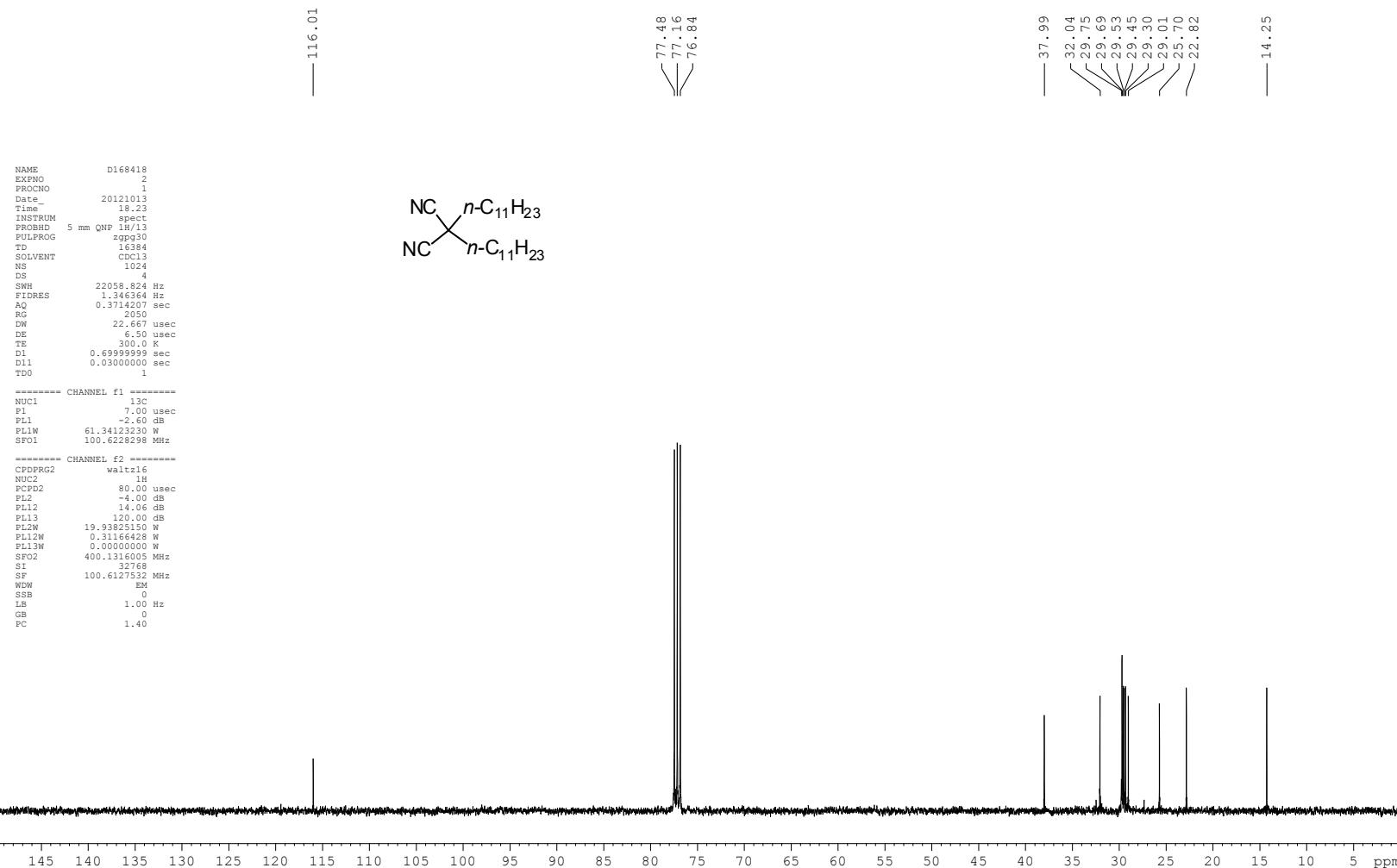


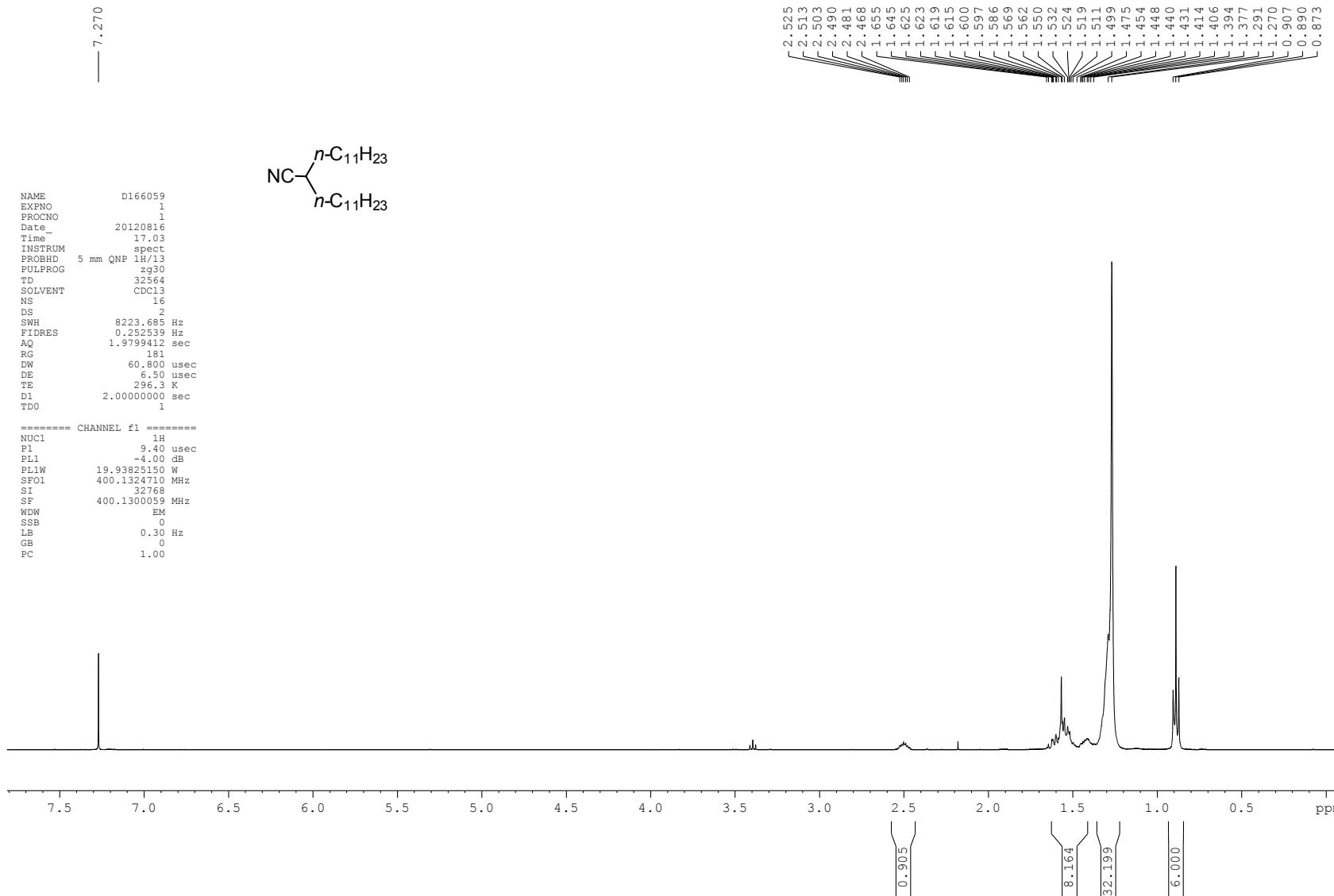
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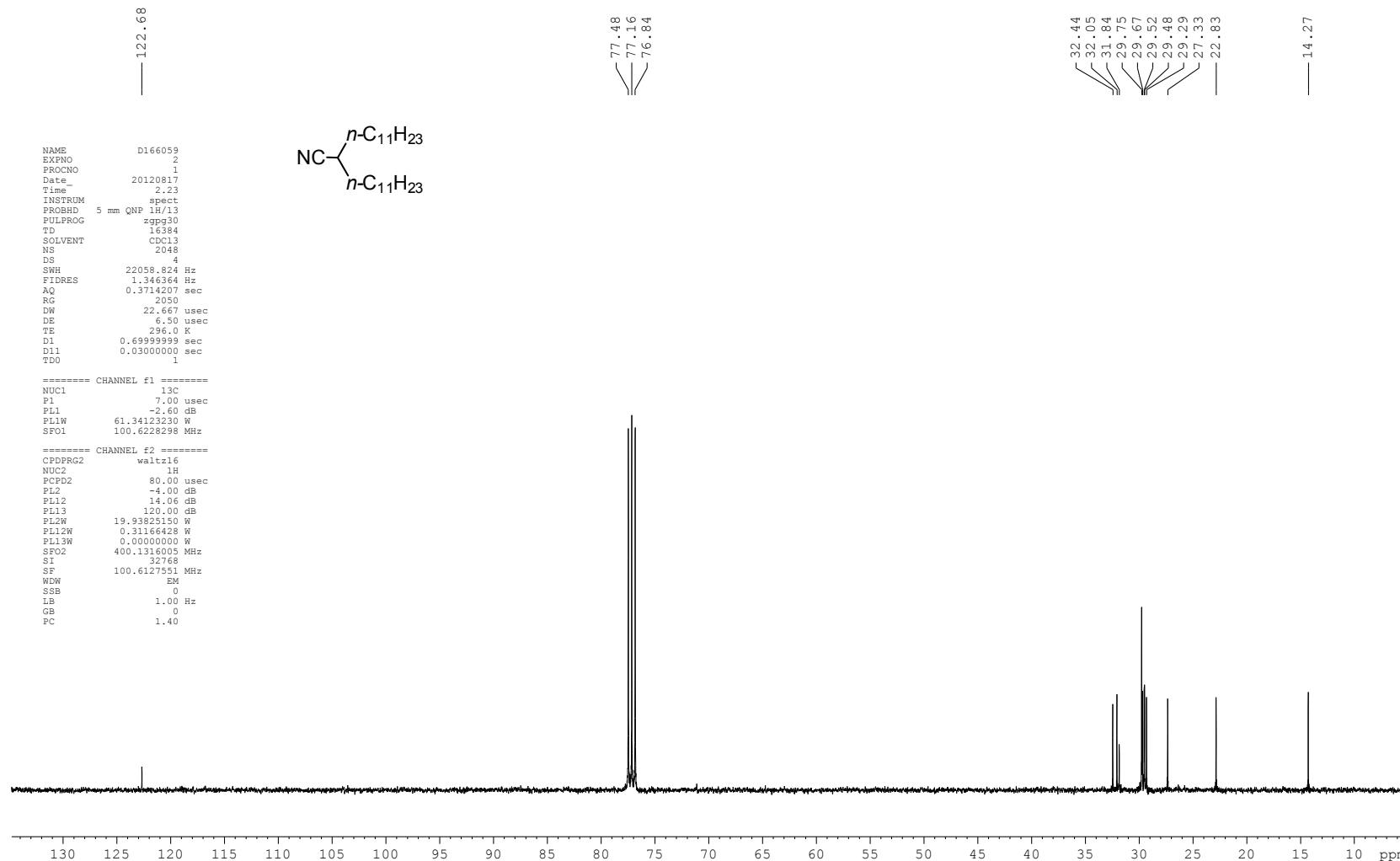
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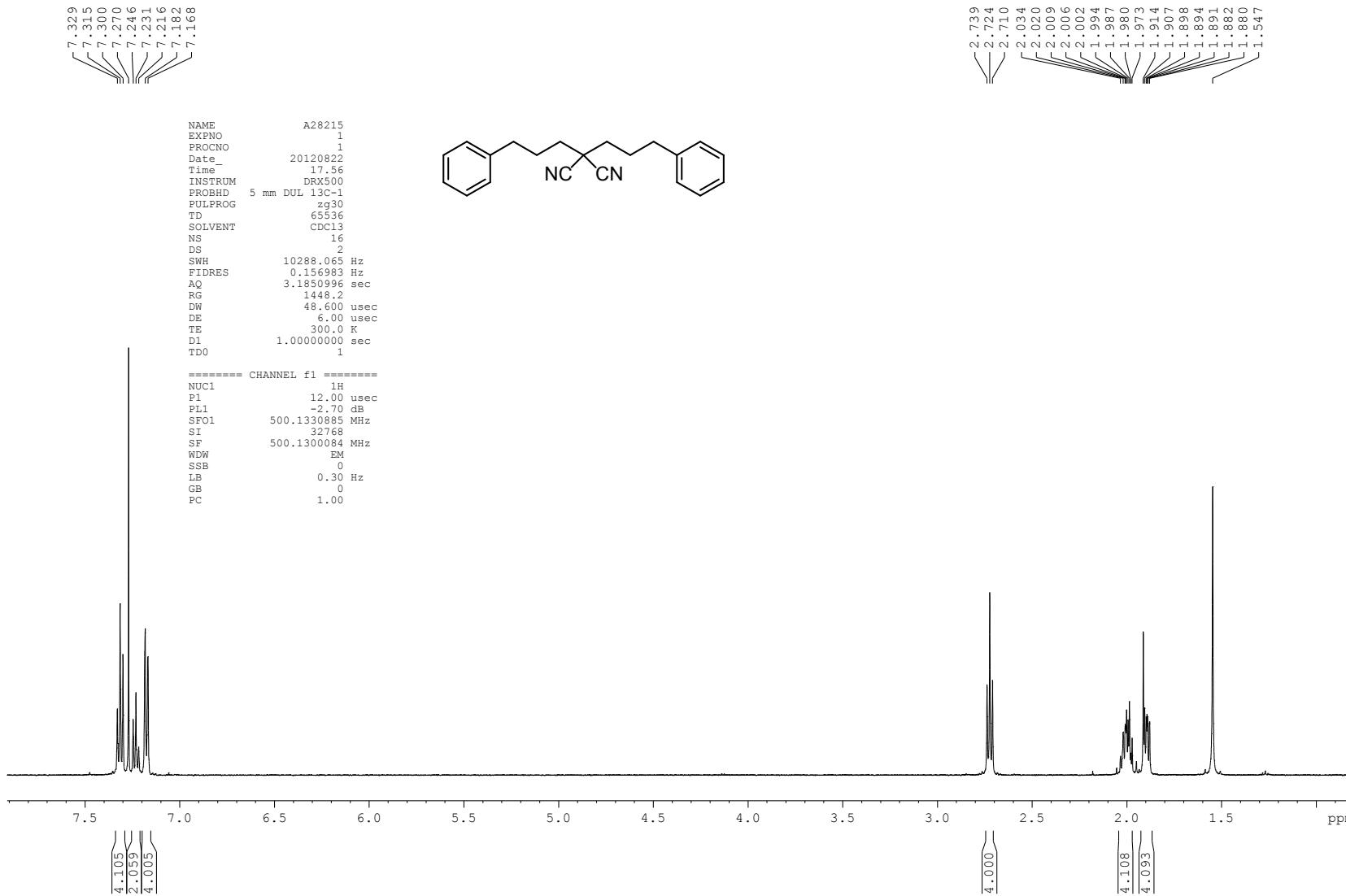
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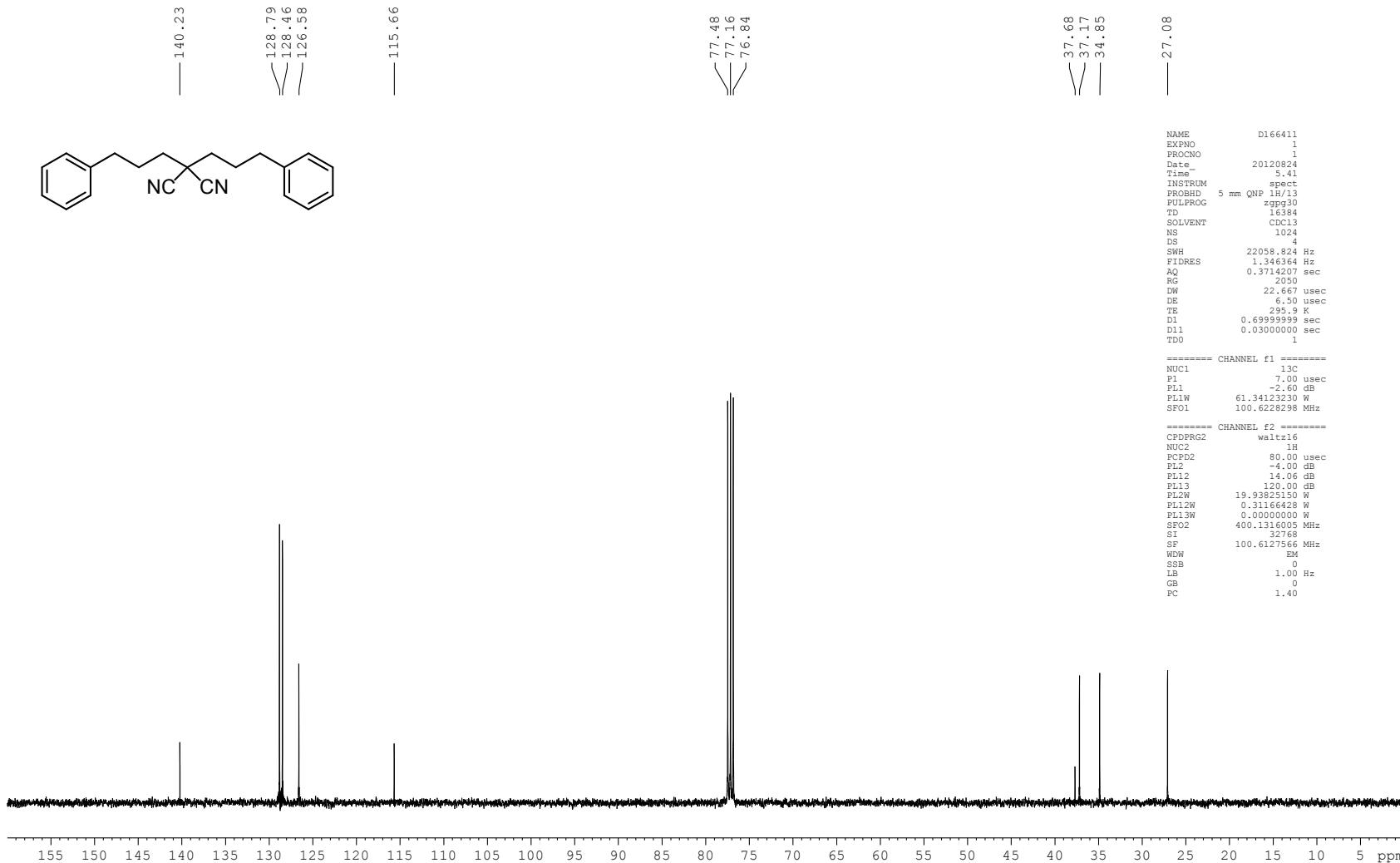










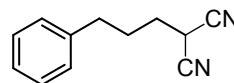


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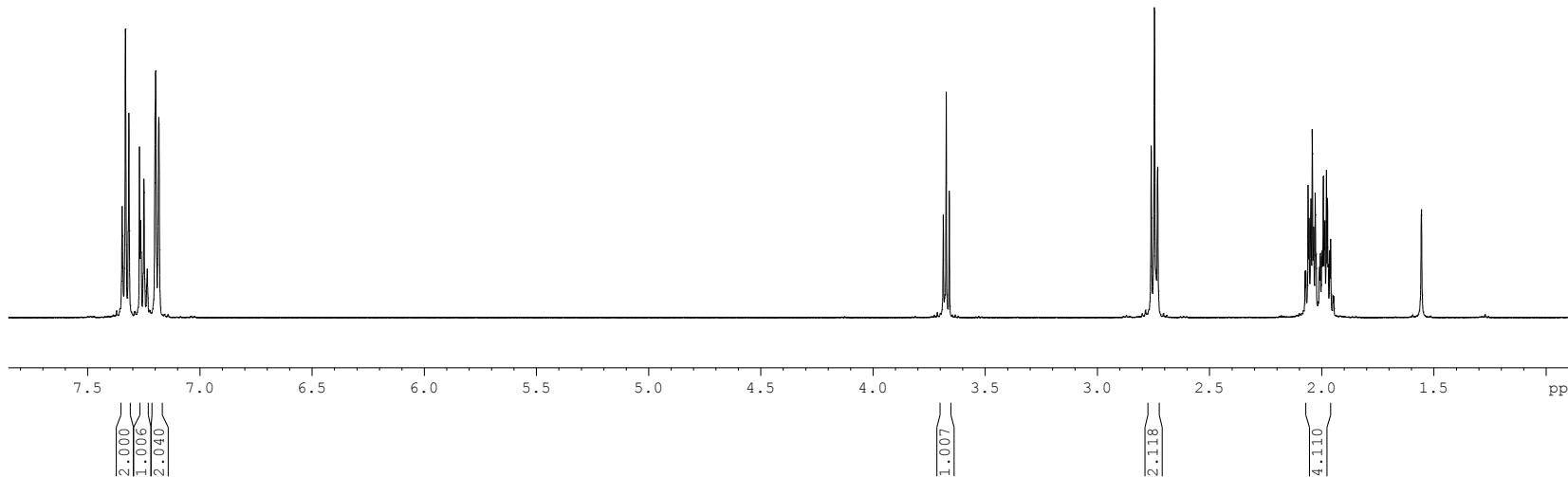
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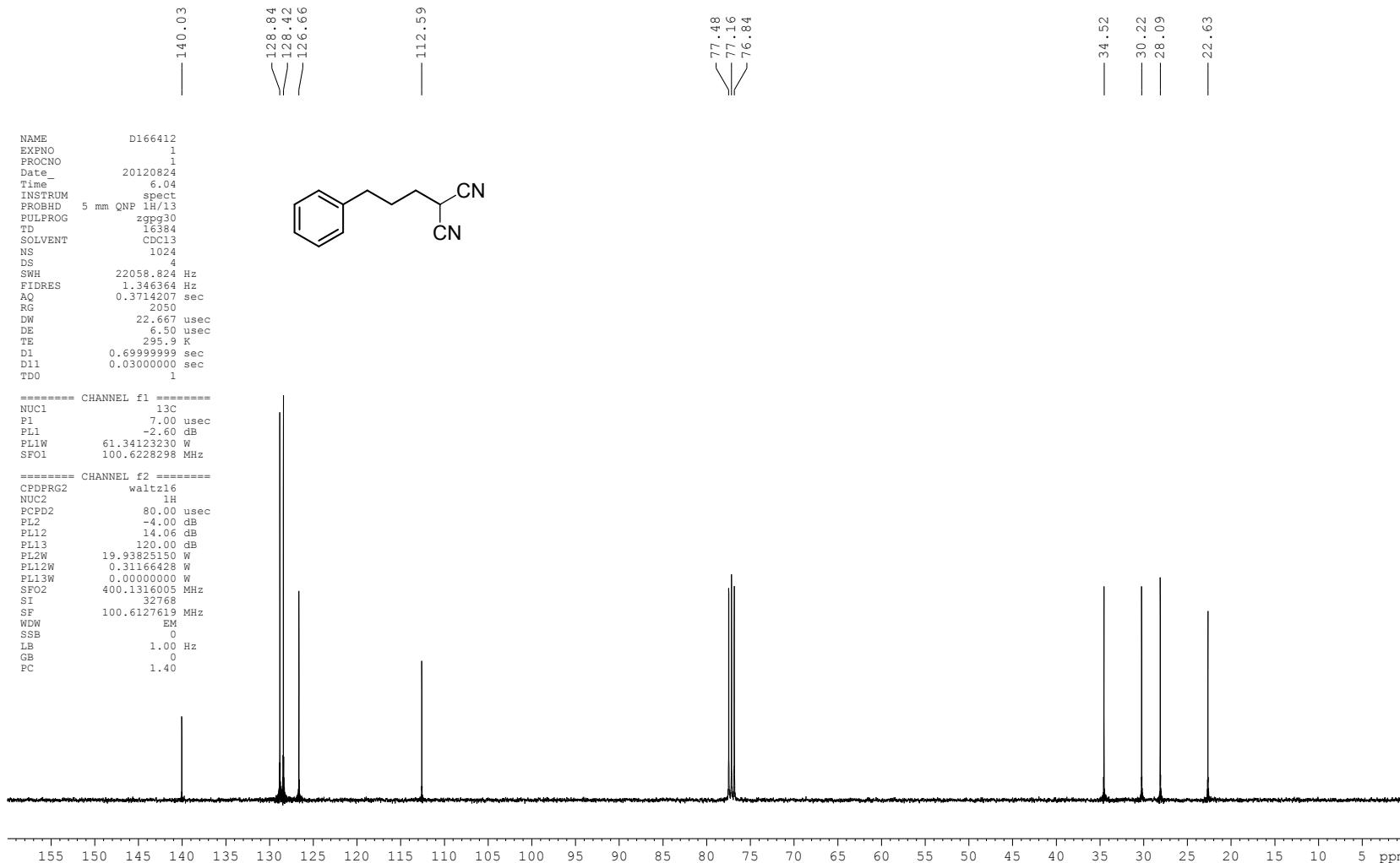
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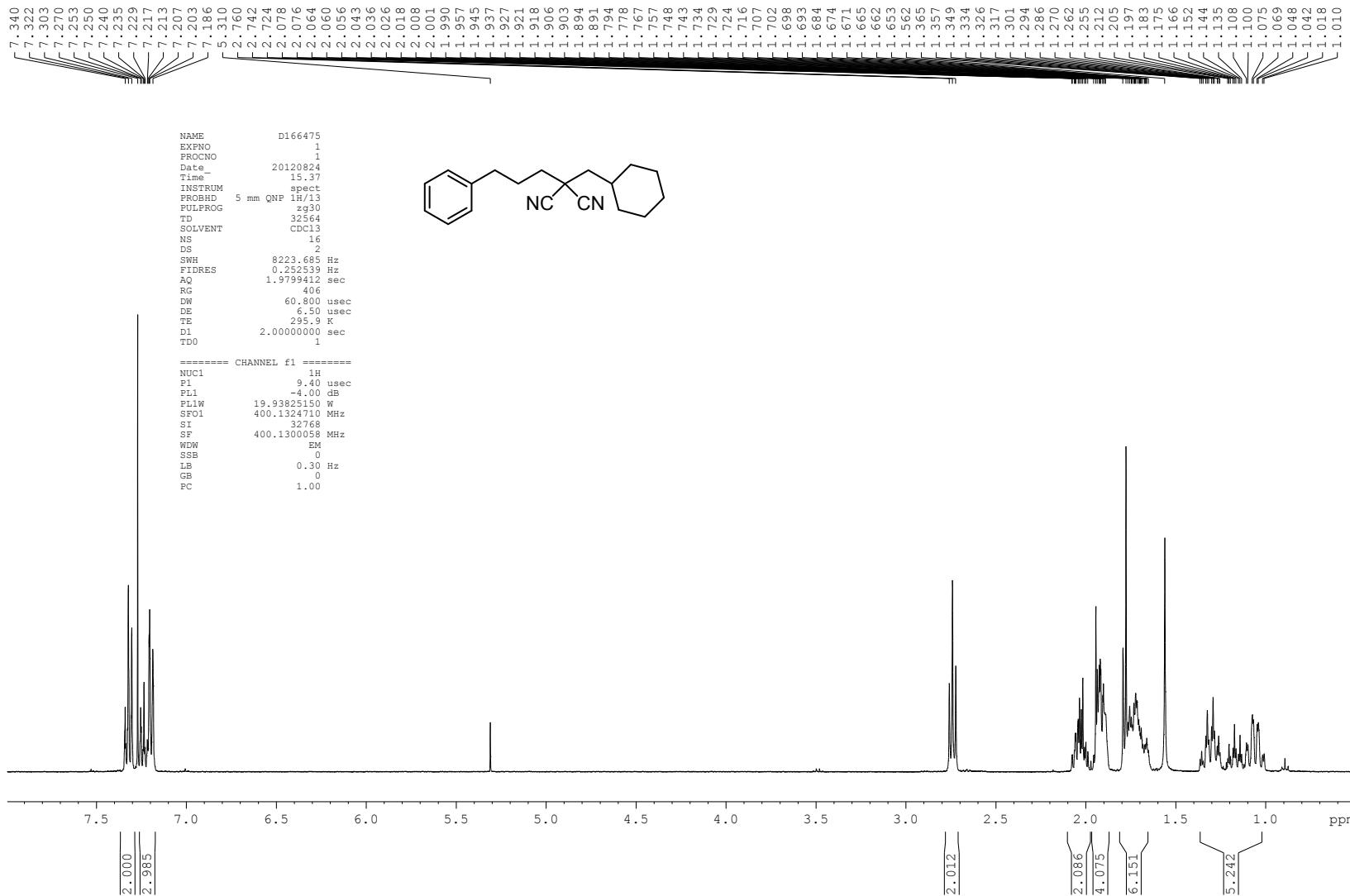


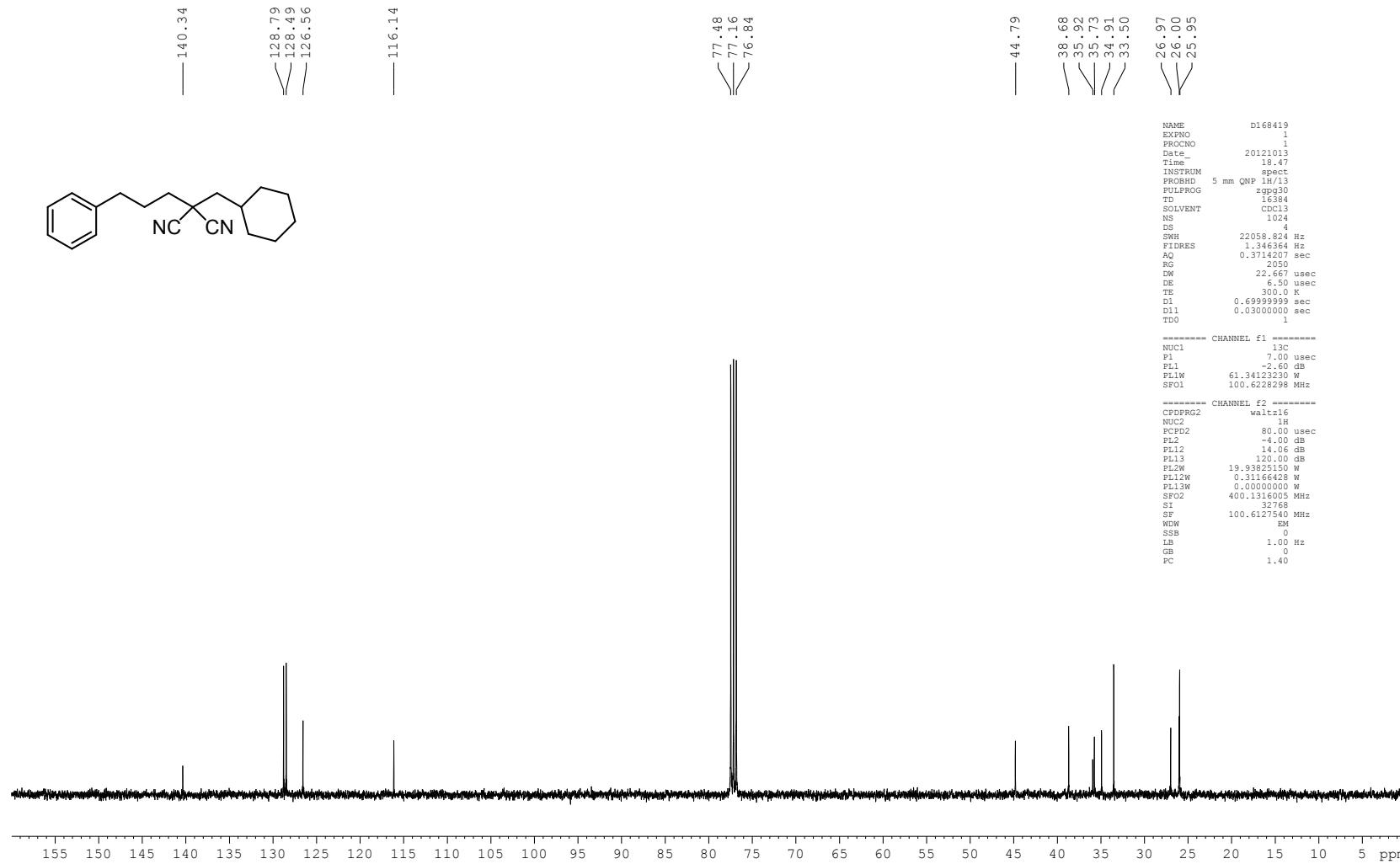
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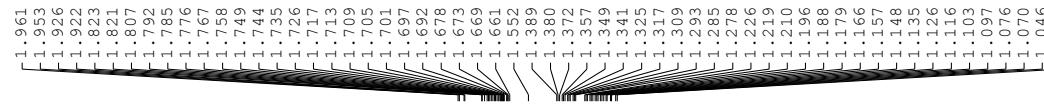
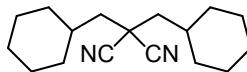




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D1 2.0000000 sec
TD0 1

===== CHANNEL f1 ======
NUC1 1H
P1 12.00 usec
P11 -1.50 dB
P1M 12.77515030 MHz
SF01 400.0324768 MHz
SI 32768
SF 400.0300028 MHz
NDW EM
SSB 0
LB 0.30 Hz
GB 0
PC 1.00



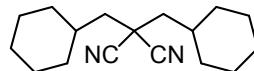
```

NAME          B22117
EXPNO         2
PROCNO        1
Date         20120820
Time         10.14
INSTRNMNT   AV400
PROBHD      5 mm PABBO BB-
PULPROG    zggp30
TD           16384
SOLVENT      C6C12
NS            1024
DS             2
SWB          23980.81 Hz
FIDRES     1.463673 Hz
AQ            0.3142 sec
RG           18390.4
DW           20.850 us
DE            20.00 us
TE            300.0 K
TM             20.00 K
DL           0.6399999 sec
D1L          0.0300000 sec
TQO          0.0300000 sec

```

===== CHANNEL f1 =====
NUC1 13C
P1 8.00 usec
PL1 -2.80 dB
PLIW 57.91424179 W
SFO1 100.5976818 MHZ

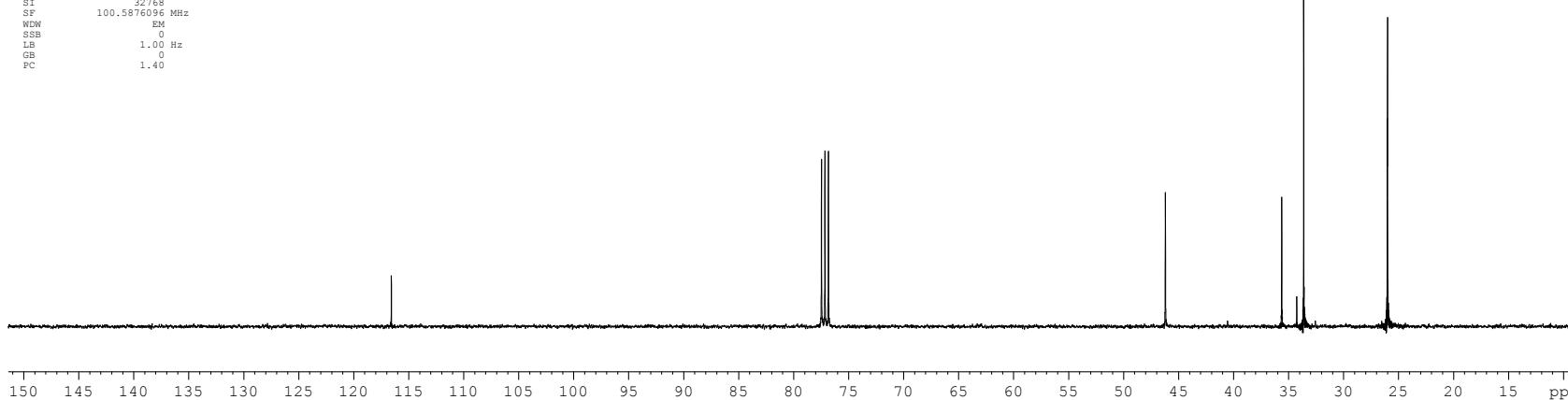
```
===== CHANNEL f2 =====
CPDFR2G          waltz16
NUC2             1H
PCPD2           90.00 usec
PL2              -3.20 dB
PL12             14.40 dB
PL13             15.30 dB
PL2W            15.00949383 W
PL12W           0.26691073 W
PL13W           0.21021472 W
SF02            400.0316001 MHz
SI                32768
SF              100.5867096 MHz
NEW               EM
SSB               0
LB                1.00 Hz
GB                 0
PC                1.40
```

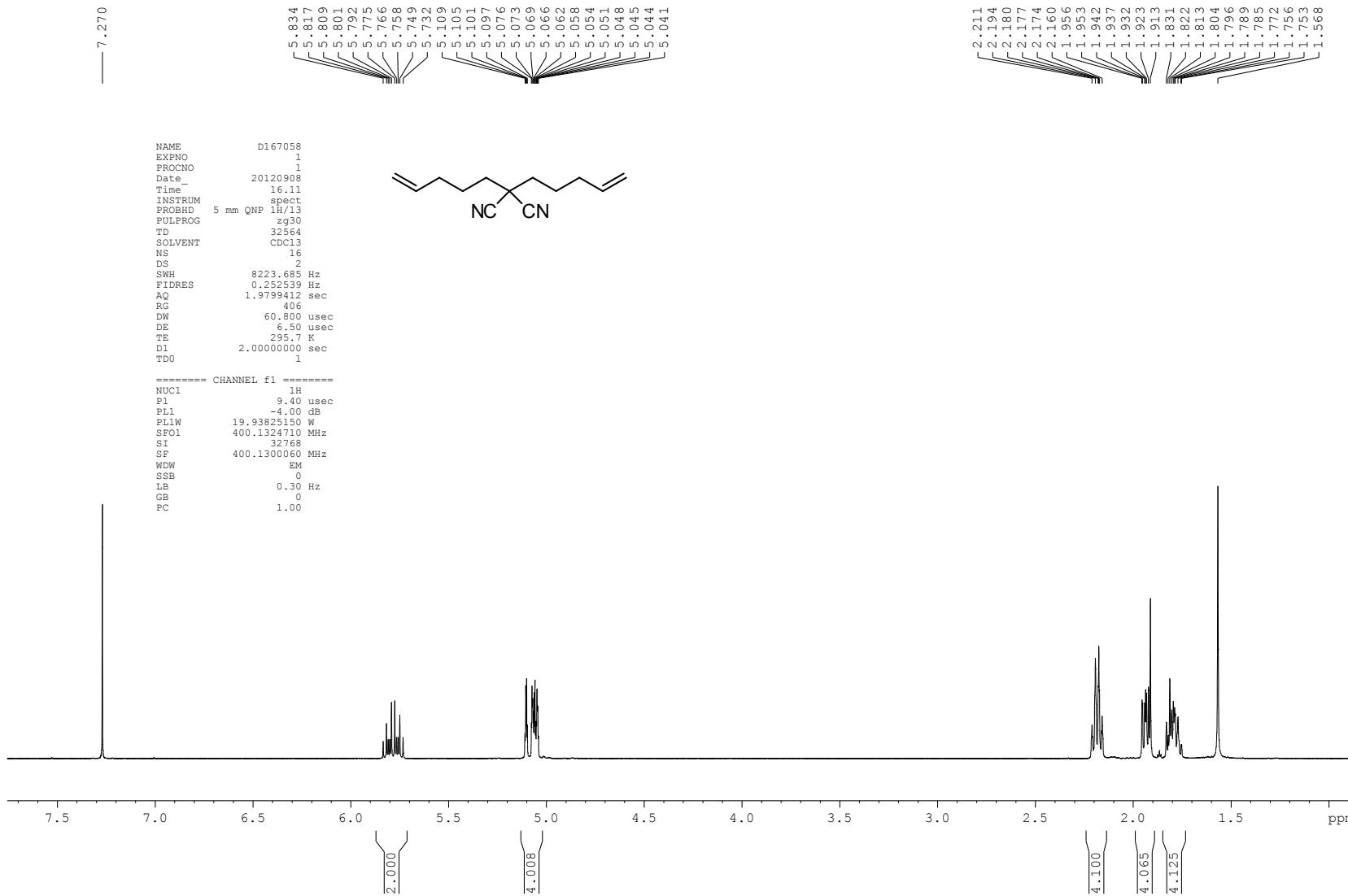


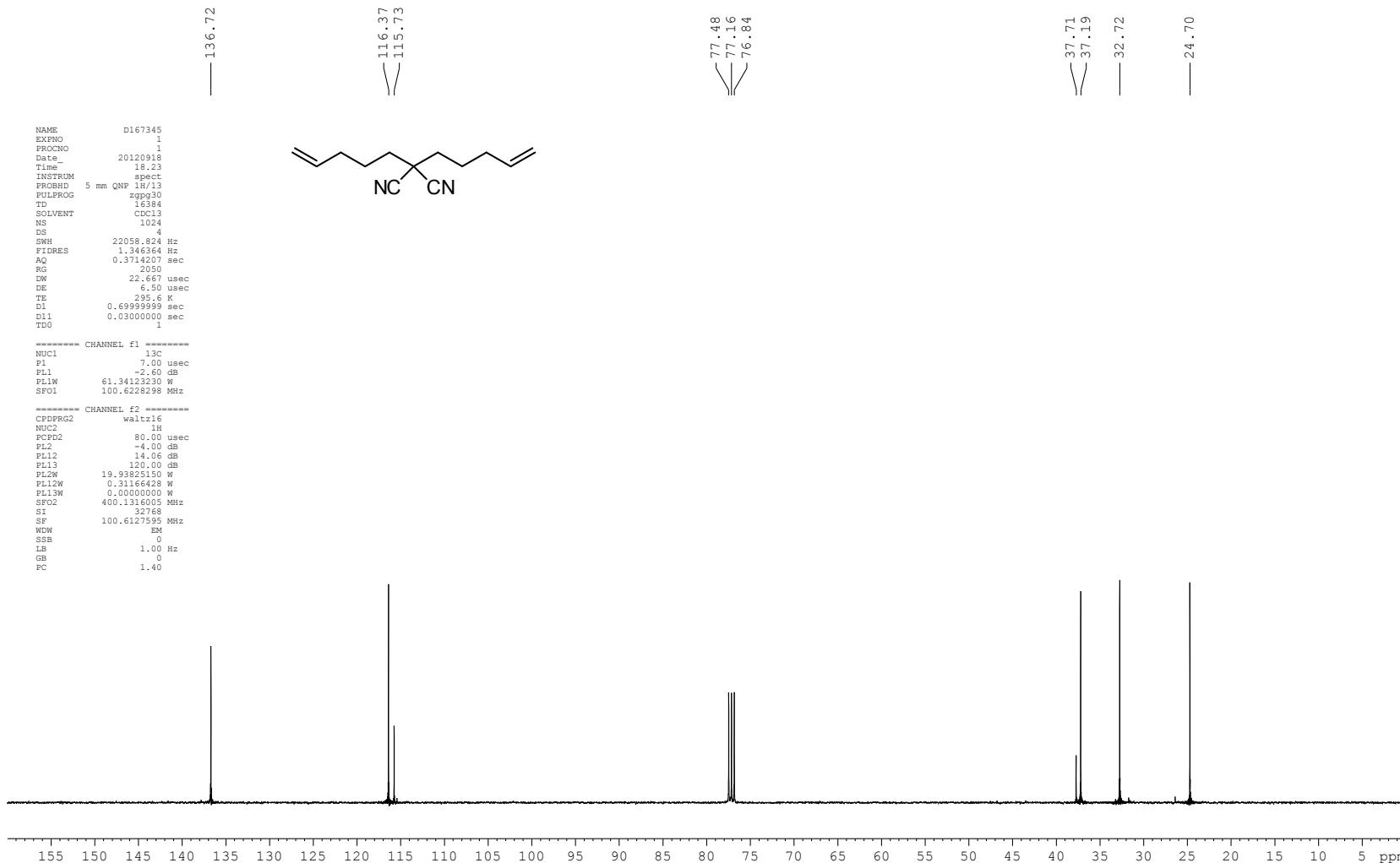
116.59

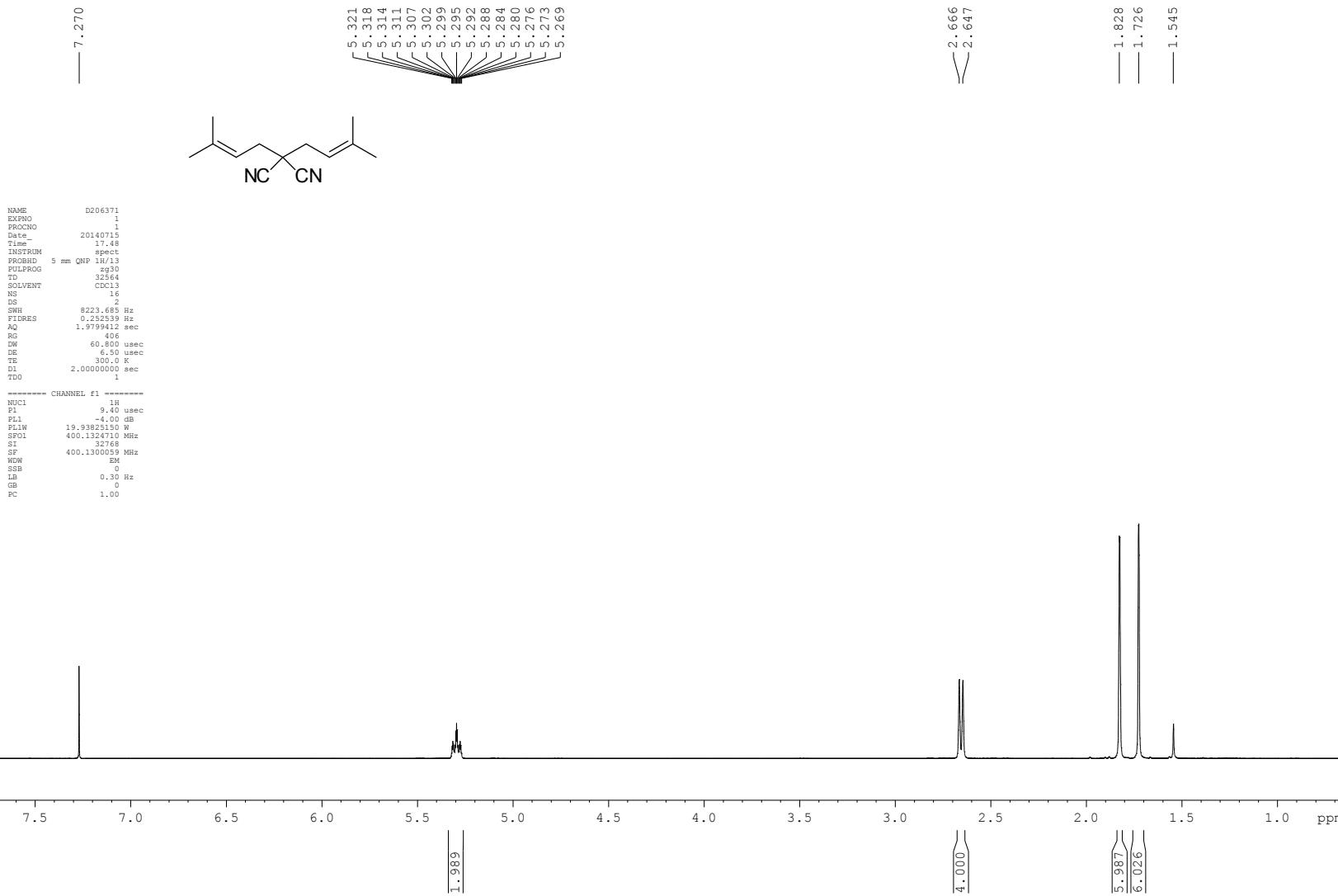
77. 48
77. 16
76. 84

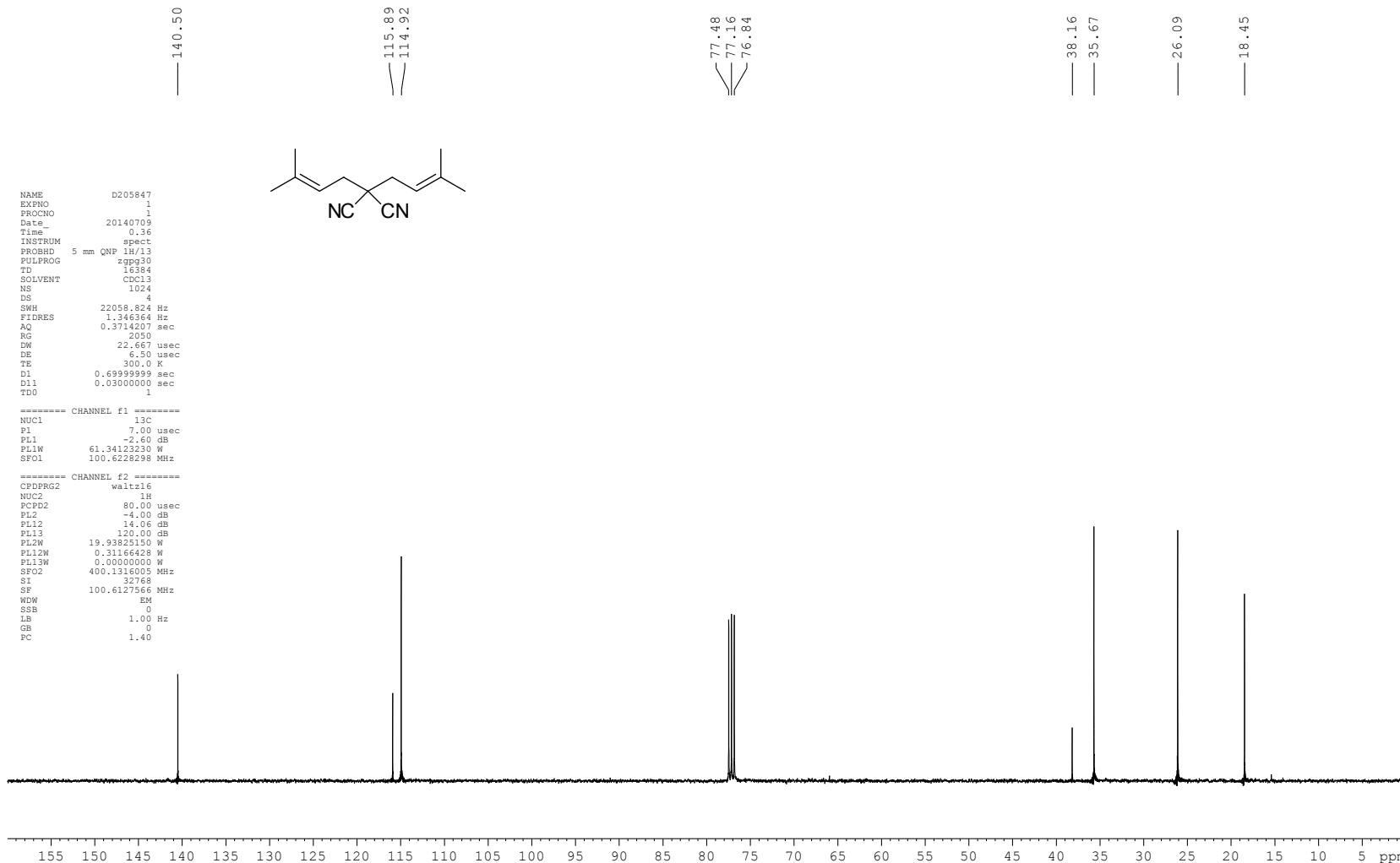
$$\begin{array}{r} 35.61 \\ - 34.24 \\ \hline 33.61 \end{array}$$







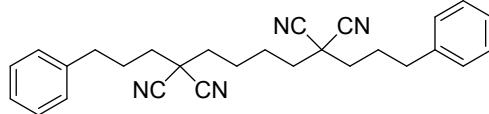




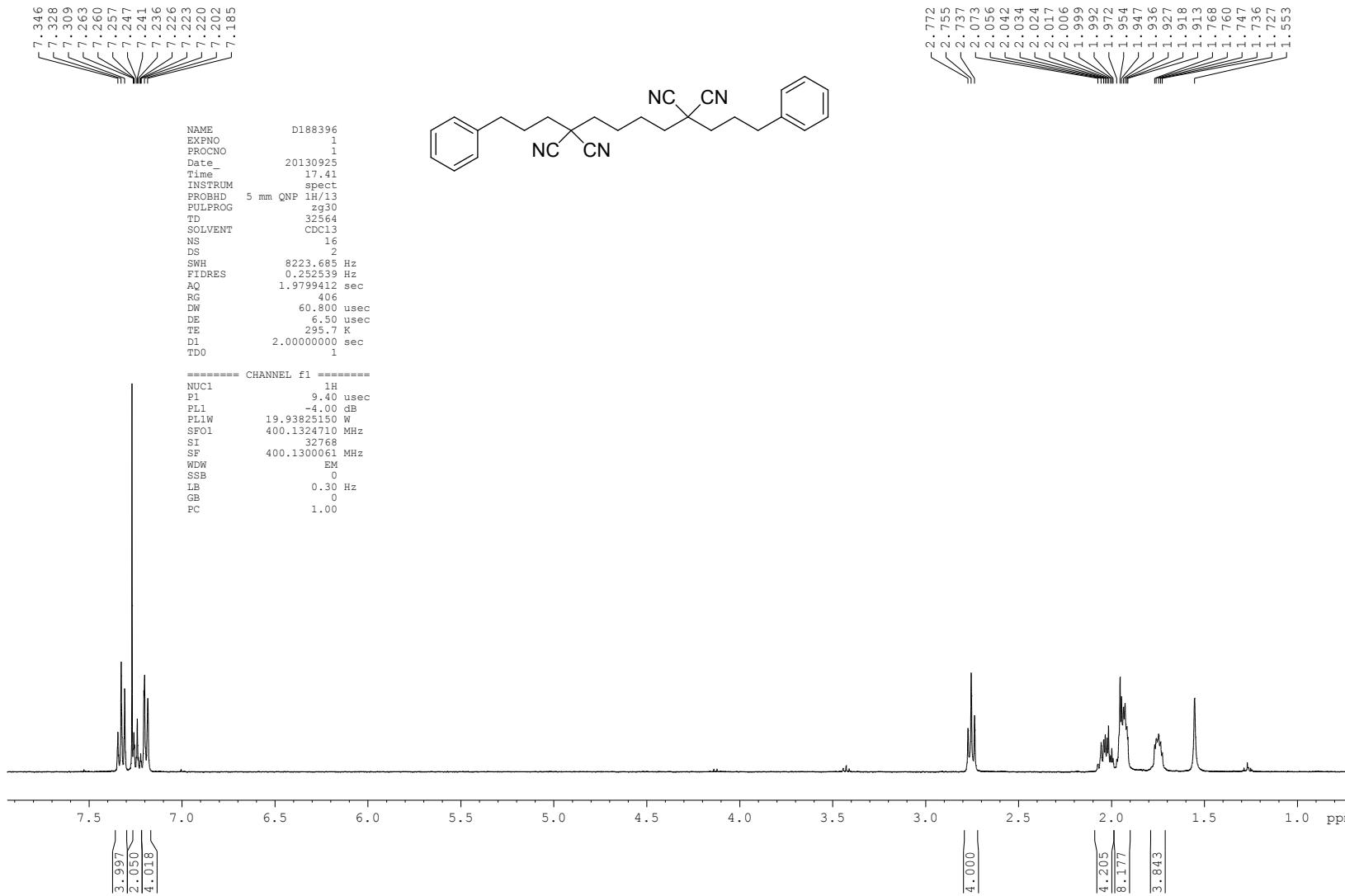
7.346
 7.328
 7.309
 7.263
 7.260
 7.223
 7.220
 7.202
 7.185
 7.247
 7.241
 7.236
 7.226
 7.223
 7.202
 7.185

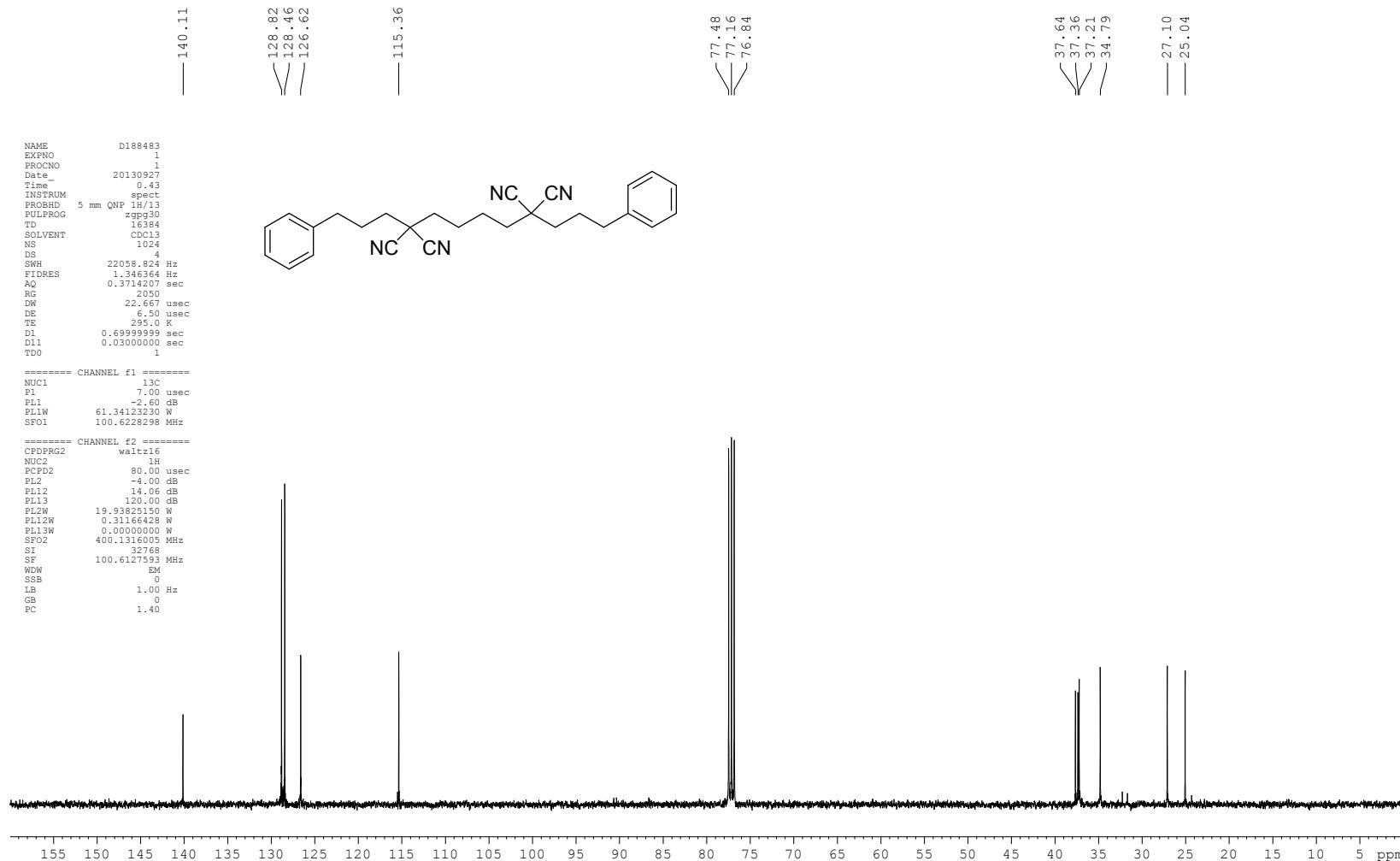
NAME D188396
 EXPNO 1
 PROCN0 1
 Date 20130925
 Time 17.41
 INSTRUM spect
 PROBHD 5 mm QNP 1H/13
 PULPROG zg30
 TD 32564
 SOLVENT CDCl3
 NS 16
 DS 2
 SWH 8223.685 Hz
 FIDRES 0.252539 Hz
 A0 1.9794912 sec
 RG 406
 DW 60.800 usec
 DE 6.50 usec
 TE 295.7 K
 DL 2.0000000 sec
 TDO 1

===== CHANNEL f1 =====
 NUC1 1H
 P1 9.40 usec
 PLL -4.00 dB
 PL1W 19.93825150 W
 SF01 400.1324710 MHz
 SI 32768
 SF 400.1300061 MHz
 WDW EM
 SSB 0
 LB 0.30 Hz
 GB 0
 PC 1.00



2.772
 2.755
 2.737
 2.073
 2.056
 2.042
 2.034
 2.024
 2.017
 2.006
 1.999
 1.992
 1.972
 1.954
 1.947
 1.936
 1.927
 1.918
 1.913
 1.768
 1.760
 1.747
 1.736
 1.727
 1.553

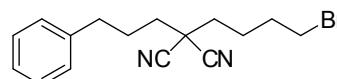




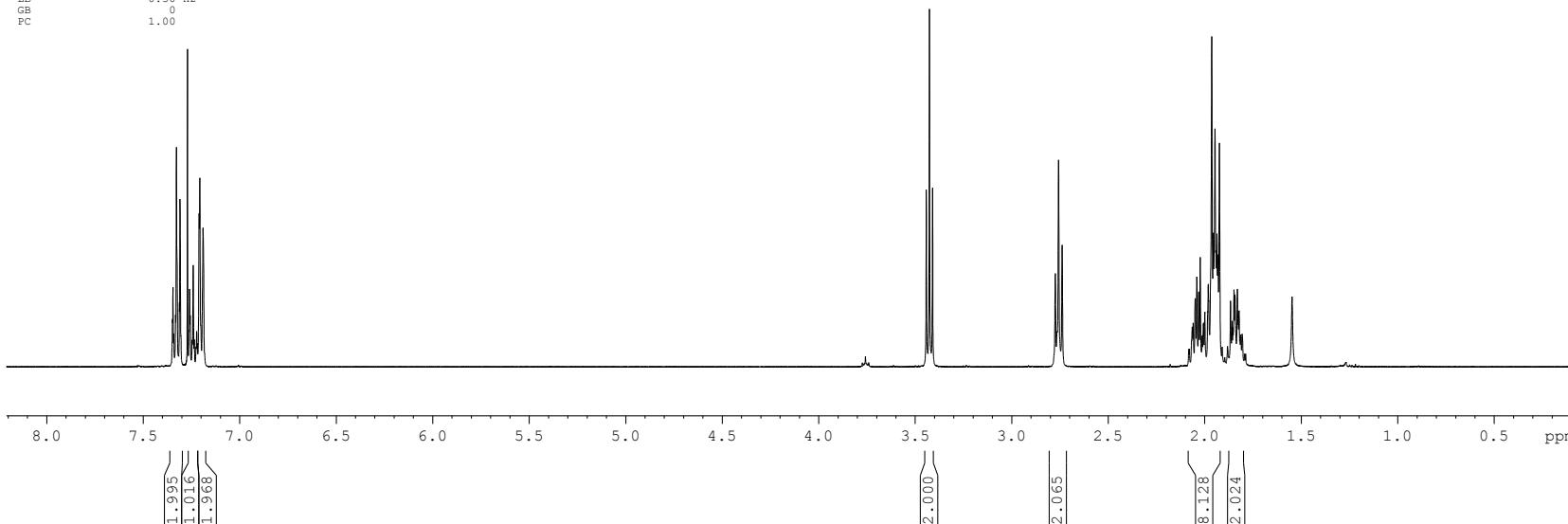
7.348
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 7.328
 7.312
 7.309
 7.304
 7.262
 7.259
 7.256
 7.246
 7.241
 7.235
 7.226
 7.222
 7.219
 7.210
 7.207
 7.201
 7.189

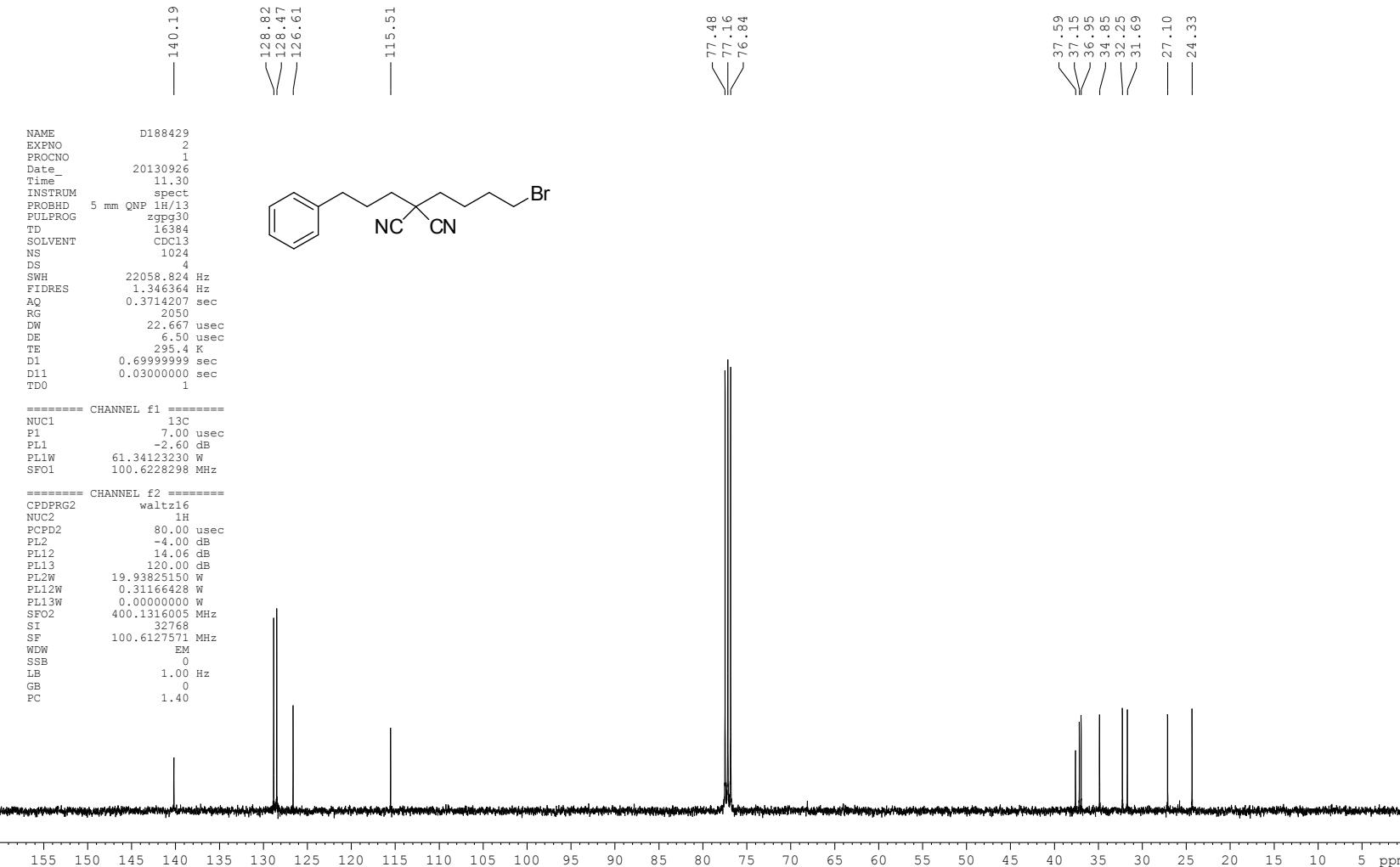
NAME D206370
 EXPNO 1
 PROCNO 1
 Date 20140715
 Time 17.43
 INSTRUM spect
 PROBHD 5 mm QNP 1H/13
 PULPROG zg30
 TD 32564
 SOLVENT CDCl3
 NS 16
 DS 2
 SWH 8223.695 Hz
 FIDRES 0.252539 Hz
 AQ 1.9799412 sec
 RG 256
 DW 60.800 usec
 DE 6.50 usec
 TE 300.0 K
 D1 2.0000000 sec
 TDO 1

===== CHANNEL f1 =====
 NUC1 1H
 P1 9.40 usec
 PLL 0.00 dB
 PLLW 19.9382510 W
 SF01 400.1324710 MHz
 SFO1 400.1300059 MHz
 SI 32768
 SF 400.1300059 MHz
 WDW EM
 SSB 0
 LB 0.30 Hz
 GB 0
 FC 1.00



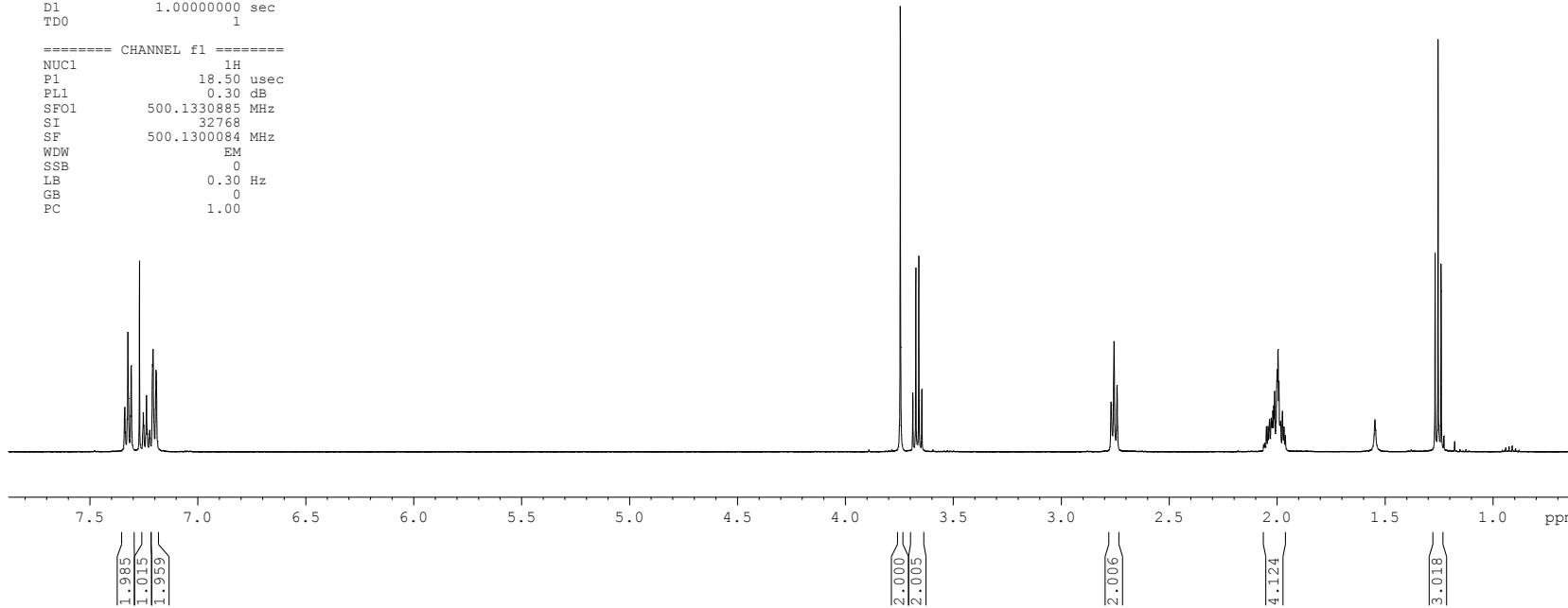
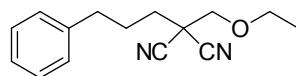
3.443
 3.427
 3.411
 2.775
 2.758
 2.740
 2.084
 2.081
 2.066
 2.061
 2.049
 2.042
 2.032
 2.025
 2.014
 2.007
 2.000
 1.986
 1.985
 1.983
 1.980
 1.964
 1.957
 1.948
 1.943
 1.938
 1.932
 1.925
 1.911
 1.883
 1.867
 1.860
 1.855
 1.849
 1.844
 1.832
 1.828
 1.823
 1.814
 1.807
 1.795
 1.789
 1.549

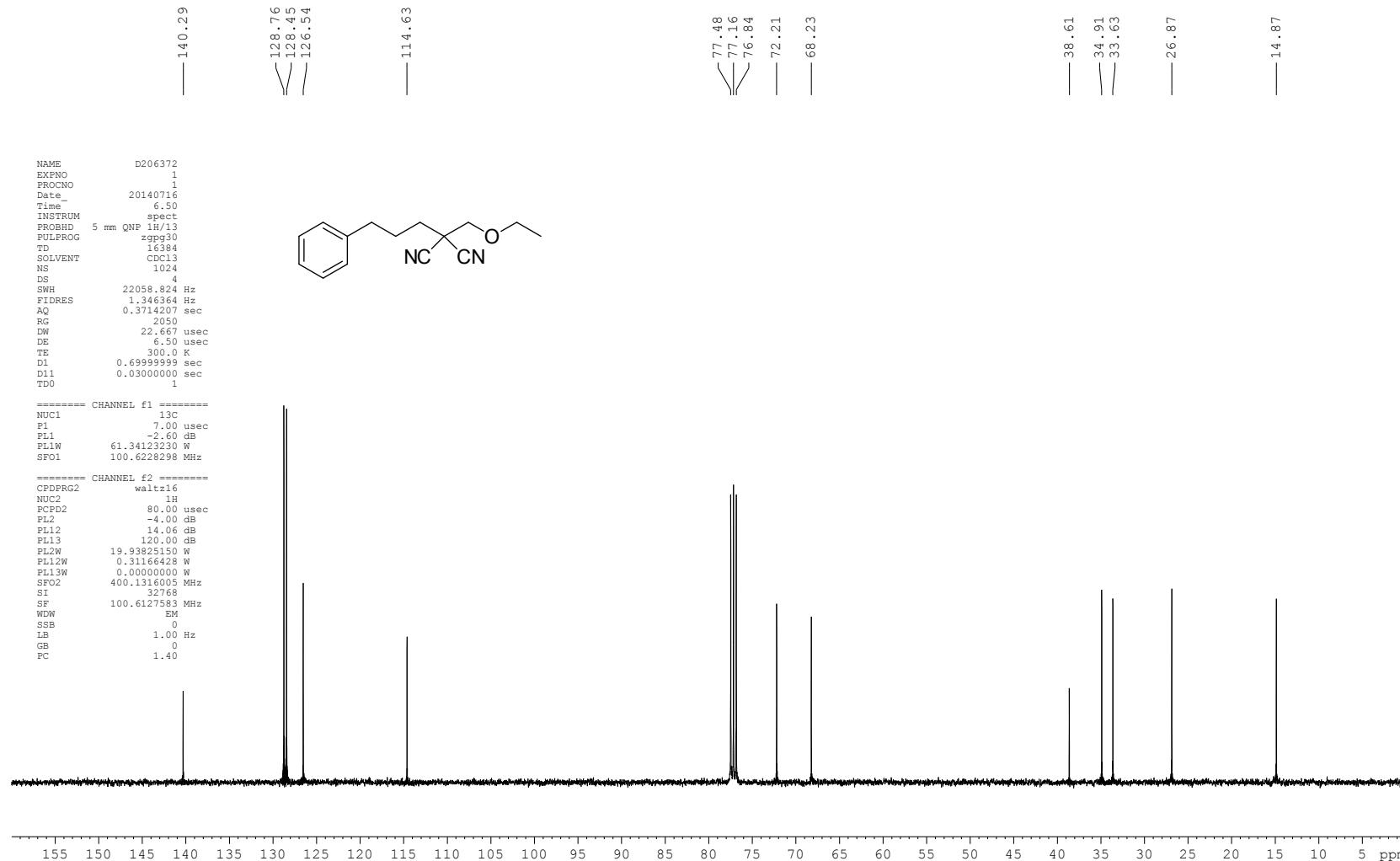


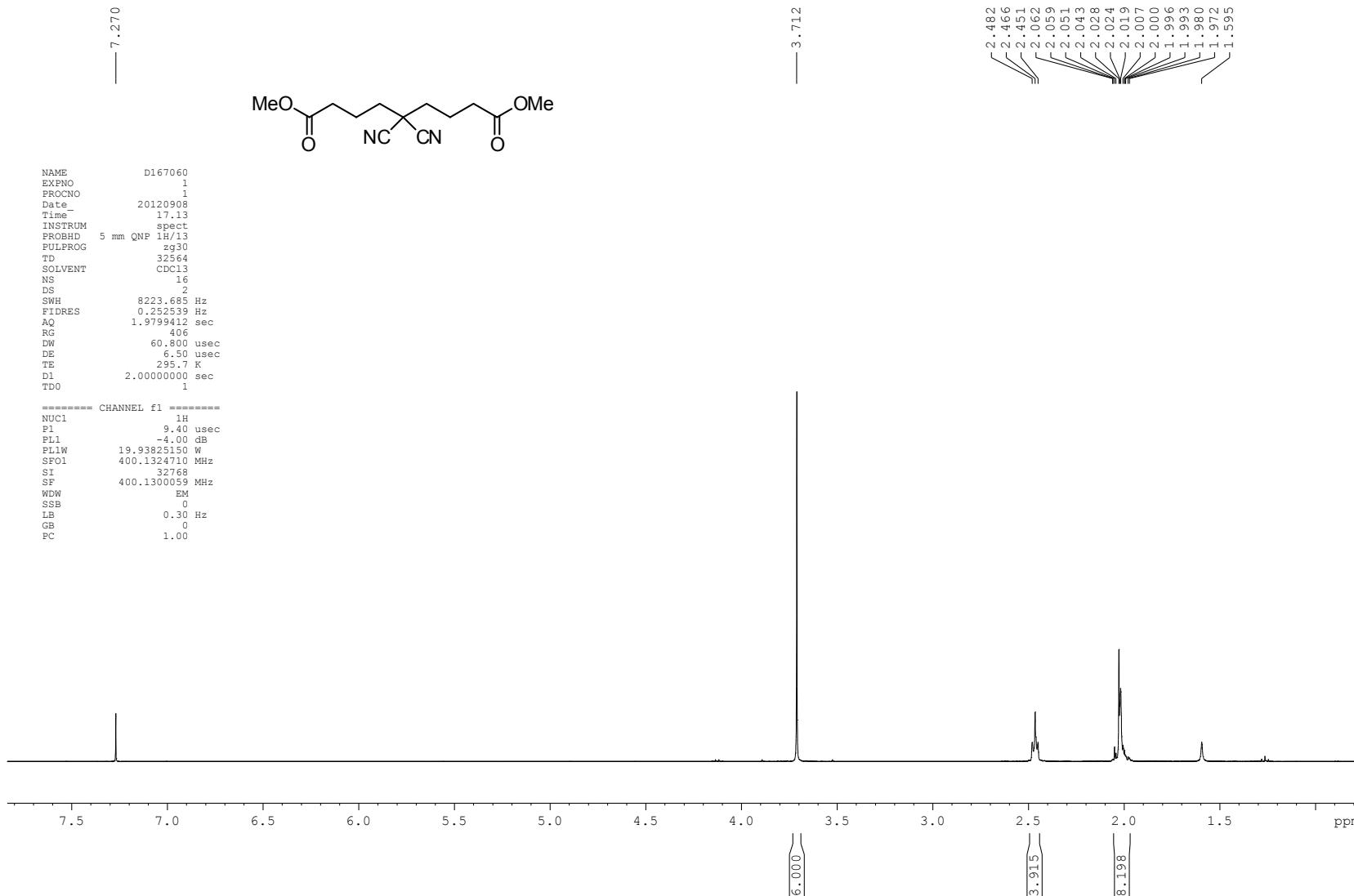


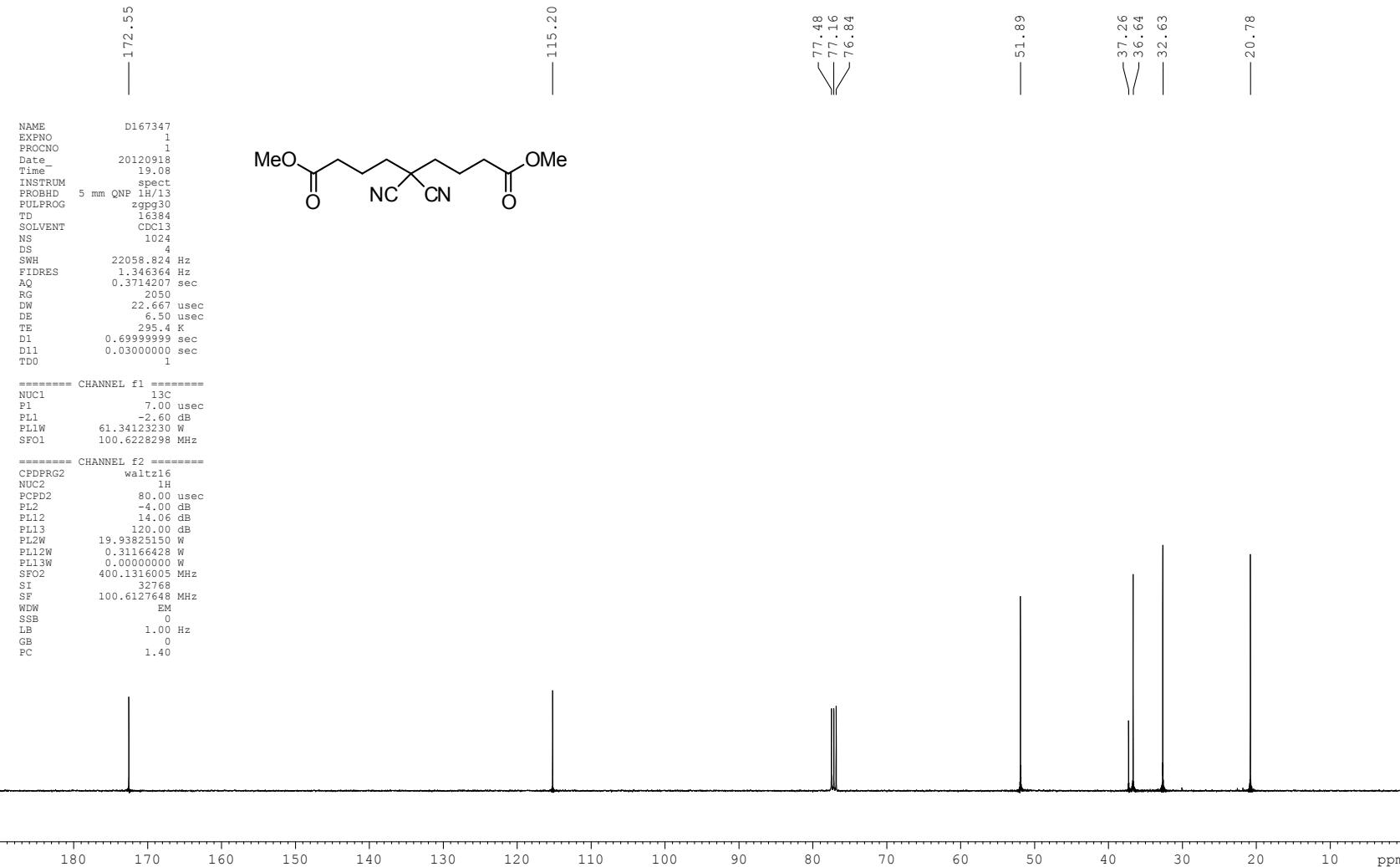
7.338
 7.324
 7.309
 7.270
 7.252
 7.238
 7.223
 7.207
 7.193

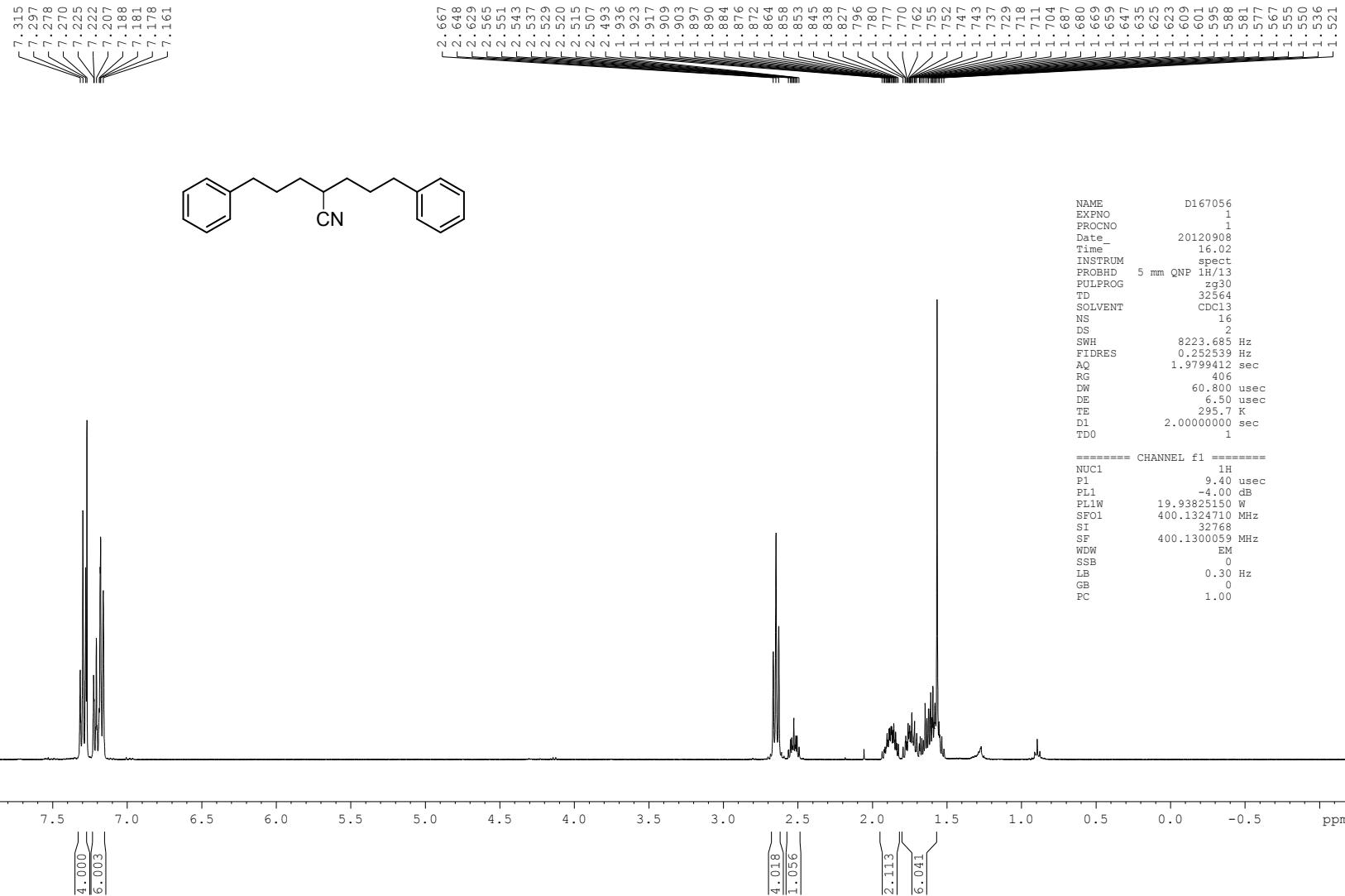
NAME A39873
 EXPNO 1
 PROCNO 1
 Date_ 20140617
 Time_ 16.48
 INSTRUM DRX500
 PROBHD 5 mm DUL 13C-1
 PULPROG zg30
 TD 65536
 SOLVENT CDCl3
 NS 16
 DS 2
 SWH 10288.065 Hz
 FIDRES 0.156983 Hz
 AQ 3.1850996 sec
 RG 645.1
 DW 48.600 usec
 DE 6.00 usec
 TE 300.0 K
 D1 1.0000000 sec
 TDO 1

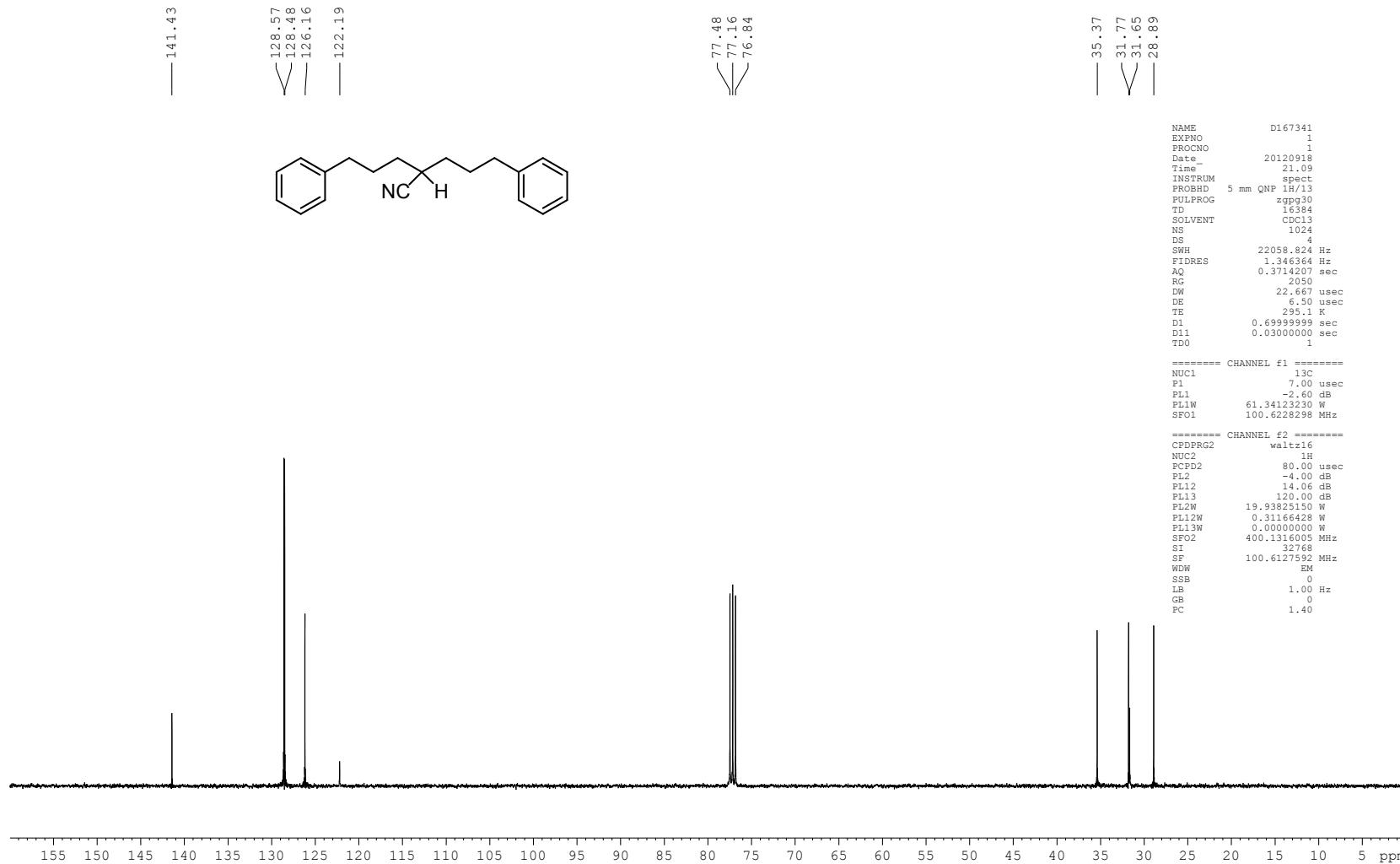


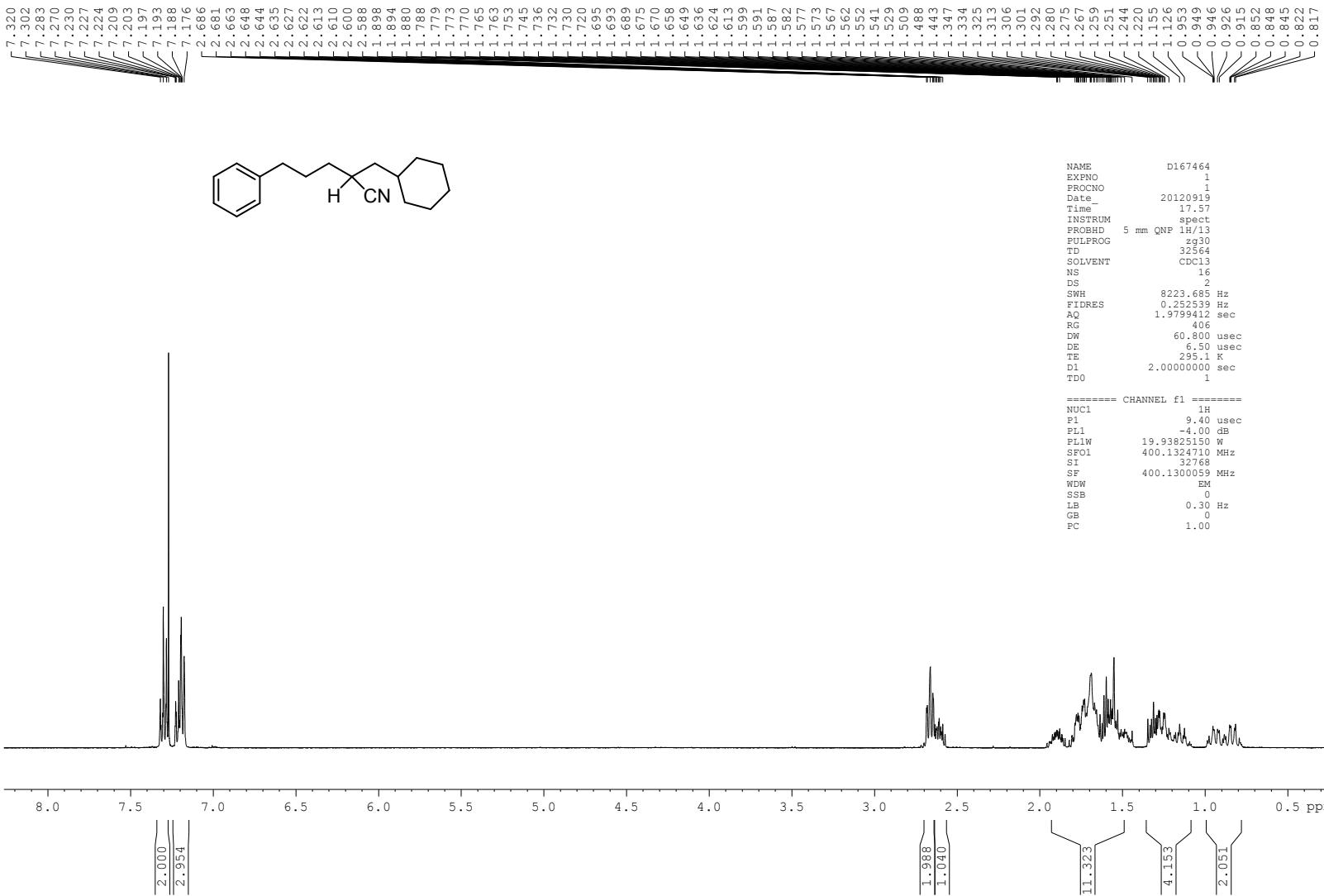


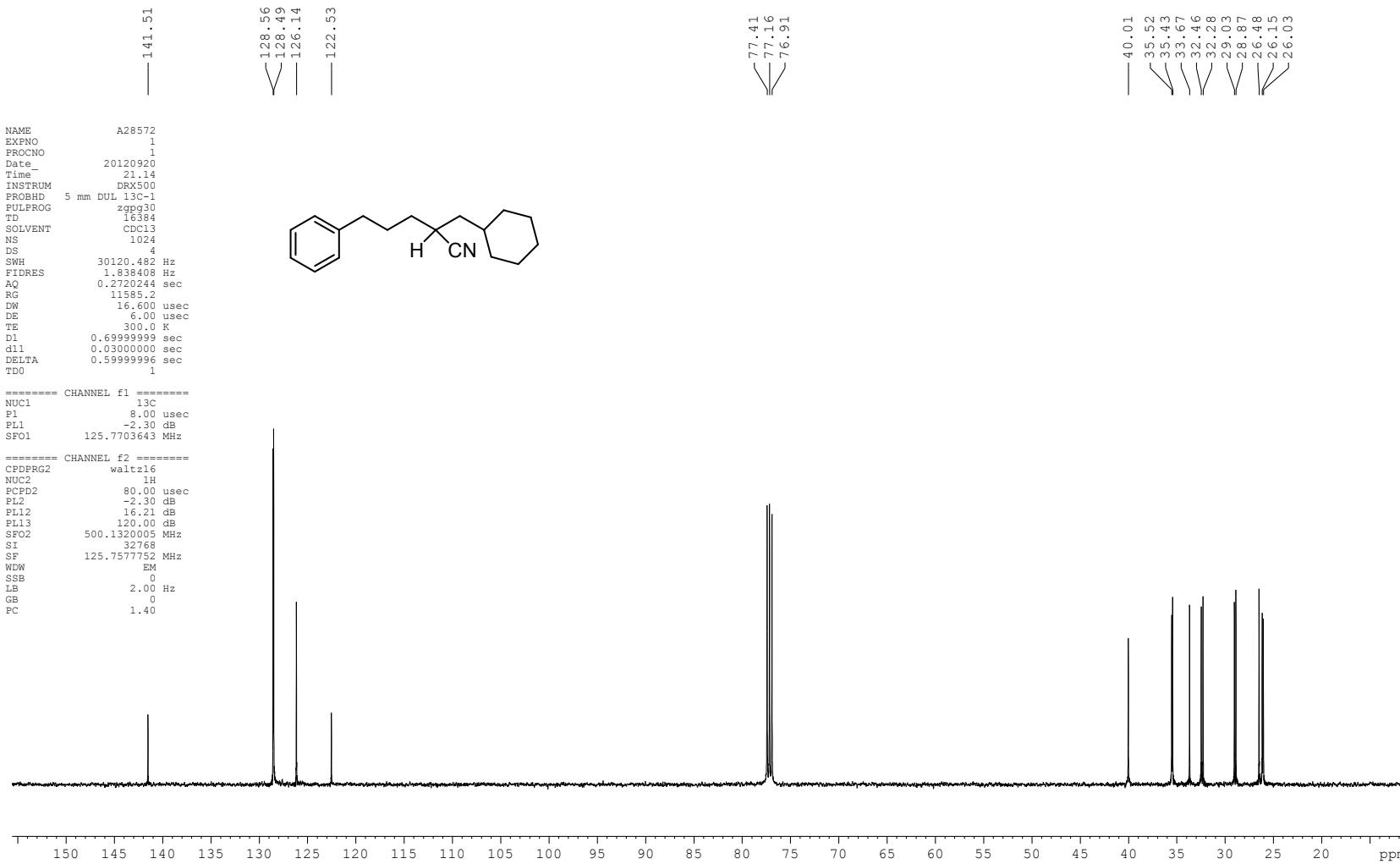


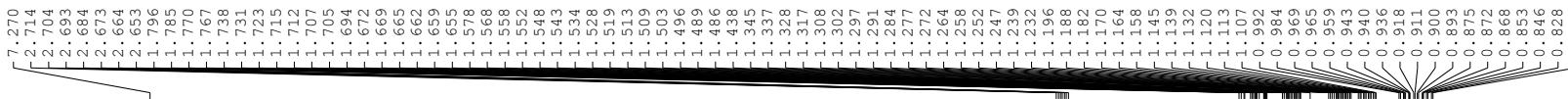




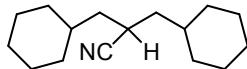








NAME A28571
EXPNO 1
PROCNO 1
Date 20120920
Time 18.54
INSTRUM DRX500
PROBHD 5 mm DUL 13C-1
PULPROG zg30
TP 65536
SOLVENT CDCl₃
NS 16
DS 2
SWH 10288.065 Hz
FIDRES 0.156983 Hz
AQ 3.1850996 sec
RG 161.3
DW 48.600 usec
DE 6.00 usec
TE 300.0 K
D1 1.0000000 sec
TD0 1



===== CHANNEL f1 ======
NUC1 1H
P1 12.00 usec
PL1 -2.70 dB
SF01 500.1330885 MHz
SI 32768
SF 500.1300081 MHz
WDW EM
SSB 0
LB 0.30 Hz
GB 0
PC 1.00

