

Supporting Information

Regiospecific Synthesis of 1,2-Disubstituted (Hetero)aryl Fused Imidazoles with Tunable Fluorescent Emission

Dongbing Zhao, Junyi Hu, Ningjie Wu, Xiaolei Huang, Xurong Qin, Jingbo Lan and
Jingsong You*

*Key Laboratory of Green Chemistry and Technology of Ministry of Education,
College of Chemistry, and State Key Laboratory of Biotherapy, West China Medical
School, Sichuan University, 29 Wangjiang Road, Chengdu 610064, PR China*

Fax: 86-28-85412203; E-mail: jsyou@scu.edu.cn

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I. General remarks

The ^1H NMR (400 MHz or 600 MHz) chemical shifts were measured relative to tetramethylsilane, CDCl_3 or $\text{DMSO}-d_6$ as the internal reference. The ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz or 150 MHz) chemical shifts were given using CDCl_3 or $\text{DMSO}-d_6$ as the internal standard. Low-resolution mass spectra (MS) were obtained by ESI-MS. High resolution mass spectra (HR-MS) were obtained with a Waters-Q-TOF-Premier (ESI). Absorption spectra were obtained on a HITACHI U-2910 spectrometer. Fluorescence spectra were collected on a Horiba Jobin Yvon-Edison Fluoromax-4 fluorescence spectrometer. The photomultiplier voltage was 700 V. To reduce the fluctuation in the excitation intensity, the lamp was kept on for 1 hour prior to the experiment.

Unless otherwise noted, all reagents were obtained from commercial suppliers and used without further purification. All syntheses and manipulations were carried out under an inert atmosphere in a glove box or using standard Schlenk or vacuum line techniques. Anhydrous caesium carbonate, NaOtBu , KOtBu , LiOtBu was purchased from Acros, and stored in a glove box. Amidines were prepared according to the literature procedure.¹ Solvents were dried by refluxing for at least 24 h over CaH_2 (DMF), or sodium (toluene), and freshly distilled and vigorously purged with N_2 for 1 hour prior to use.

II. General procedure for the synthesis of amidines or diamidines¹

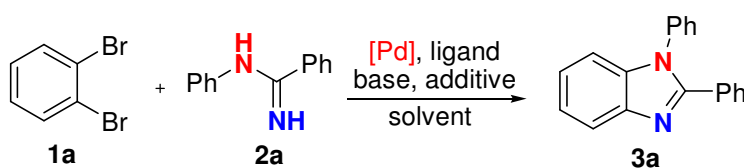
Method A: Under nitrogen gas, to a solution of aniline (20 mmol) in DMSO (10 mL) was added NaH (440 mg, 22 mmol) at room temperature. After the mixture was stirred for 30 min, benzonitrile (20 mmol) was added. The reaction mixture was stirred overnight, and then poured into 200 mL of ice-water. The precipitate was collected by filtration, washed with petroleum ether and dried under vacuum to yield the desired compound as a pale white solid. The residue was either purified by silica gel chromatography or recrystallization using EtOH.

Method B: A baked-out and N_2 -purged Schlenk flask was initially charged with 30 mmol or 60 mmol primary amine and 20 mL of absolute THF. The solution was

cooled to -78 °C, and 12 mL of *n*-BuLi (in hexane, 2.5 M) was added dropwise with stirring. The mixture was allowed to thaw and stirred at room temperature for 30 min, and 30 mmol of nitrile in THF were then slowly added dropwise with vigorous stirring at -78 °C. Upon completion of addition, stirring was continued at -78 °C for 2 h. The mixture was allowed to thaw and hydrolyzed by adding 40 mL of water. The precipitate was collected by filtration, washed with petroleum ether and dried under vacuum to yield the desired compound as a pale white solid. The residue was either purified by silica gel chromatography or recrystallization using EtOH.

III. Optimization of the twofold amination of 1,2-dibromobenzene with *N*-phenylbenzamidine

Table S1: Optimization of the twofold amination of *N*-phenylbenzamidine with 1, 2-dibromobenzene ^a



Entry	Palladium source	Ligand	Base	Solvent	Yield ^b
1	Pd(OAc) ₂	-	Cs ₂ CO ₃	toluene	n.r
2	Pd(OAc) ₂	Cy ₃ P·HBF ₄	Cs ₂ CO ₃	toluene	n.r
3	Pd(OAc) ₂	X-phos	Cs ₂ CO ₃	toluene	n.r
4	Pd(OAc) ₂	Daves-phos	Cs ₂ CO ₃	toluene	n.r
5	Pd(OAc) ₂	Dppf	Cs ₂ CO ₃	toluene	13%
6	Pd(OAc) ₂	BINAP	Cs ₂ CO ₃	toluene	85%
7	Pd(OAc) ₂	Xantphos	Cs ₂ CO ₃	toluene	89%
8	Pd(OAc) ₂	Xantphos	KOtBu	toluene	<5%
9	Pd(OAc) ₂	Xantphos	LiOtBu	toluene	<5%
10	Pd(OAc) ₂	Xantphos	NaOtBu	toluene	92%
11 ^[c]	Pd(OAc) ₂	Xantphos	NaOtBu	toluene	99%
12	Pd(OAc) ₂	Xantphos	NaOtBu	DMF	trace

13	Pd(OAc) ₂	Xantphos	NaOtBu	CH ₃ CN	trace
14	Pd(OAc) ₂	Xantphos	NaOtBu	DMSO	n.r
15	Pd ₂ (dba) ₃	Xantphos	NaOtBu	toluene	trace
16	PdCl ₂	Xantphos	NaOtBu	toluene	trace
17	Pd(PPh ₃) ₄	Xantphos	NaOtBu	toluene	32%
18 ^c	Pd(dba) ₂	Xantphos	NaOtBu	toluene	98%

^a Reactions were carried out using [Pd] (2.5 mol%), base (4.0 equiv), ligand (2.5 mol%), *o*-dibromobenzene (0.25 mmol), and *N*-phenylbenzamidine (0.3 mmol) (0.25 M) at 140 °C for 24 hours. ^b Yield of isolated product based on *o*-dibromobenzene. ^c 4 Å sieves (100 mg) was added as the additive. Cy₃P·HBF₄ = tricyclohexylphosphonium tetrafluoroborate, X-phos = 2-dicyclohexylphosphino-2',4',6'-triisopropylbiphenyl, Daves-phos = 2-dicyclohexylphosphino-2'-(*N,N*-dimethylamino)biphenyl, Dppf = 1,1'-bis(diphenylphosphino)ferrocene; BINAP = (*R*)-(+)-2,2'-bis(diphenylphosphino)-1,1'-binaphthyl, Xantphos = 4,5-bis(diphenylphosphino)-9,9-dimethylxanthene.

IV. General procedure for Tables 1-2

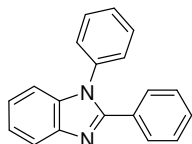
A flame-dried Schlenk test tube with a magnetic stirring bar was charged with Pd(dba)₂ or Pd(OAc)₂ (2.5-5.0 mol%), Xantphos (2.5-5.0 mol%), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) or Cs₂CO₃ (324 mg, 1.0 mmol), amidine (0.30 mmol), *o*-dihaloarene (0.25 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) in the presence of 4 Å sieves (100 mg) under N₂. A rubber septum was replaced with a glass stopper, and the system was then evacuated three times and back filled with N₂. The reaction mixture was stirred for 10 min at room temperature, and then heated at 140 °C for 24 h. The reaction mixture was then cooled to ambient temperature, diluted with 10-15 mL of CH₂Cl₂, filtered through a plug of silica gel, and washed with 10-20 mL of CH₂Cl₂. The combined organic extracts were concentrated and the resulting residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel to provide the desired product.

V. General procedure for the synthesis of benzobisimidazole

A flame-dried Schlenk test tube with a magnetic stirring bar was charged with Pd(OAc)₂ (5.0 mol%), Xantphos (5.0 mol%), *t*BuONa (192 mg, 2.0 mmol), *N*-phenylbenzamidine (118 mg, 0.60 mmol), 1,4-dibromo-2,5-diiodobenzene (122 mg,

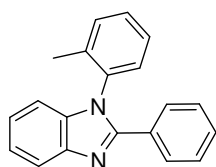
0.25 mmol) or 1,5-dibromo-2,4-diiodobenzene (122 mg, 0.25 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) in the presence of 4 Å sieves (100 mg) under N₂. A rubber septum was replaced with a glass stopper, and the system was then evacuated three times and back filled with N₂. The reaction mixture was stirred for 10 min at room temperature, and then heated at 140 °C for 24 h. The reaction mixture was then cooled to ambient temperature, diluted with 10-15 mL of CH₂Cl₂, filtered through a plug of silica gel, and washed with 10-20 mL of CH₂Cl₂. The combined organic extracts were concentrated and the resulting residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel to provide the desired product.

VI. Experimental data for the described substances



1,2-Diphenyl-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3a)²

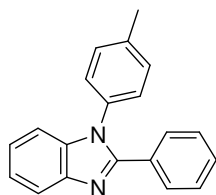
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-phenylbenzamidine (59 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (1.4 mg, 0.00625 mmol), Xantphos (3.7 mg, 0.00625 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (99% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 7.26-7.29 (m, 2H), 7.31-7.36 (m, 6H), 7.45-7.52 (m, 3H), 7.56 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.89 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H) ppm. MS (ESI) *m/z*: 271.3 [M+H]⁺.



2-Phenyl-1-*o*-tolyl-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3b)

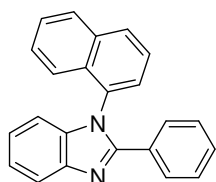
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-*o*-tolylbenzamidine (63.1 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(dba)₂ (7.2 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc

afforded a white solid (95% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 1.91 (s, 3H), 7.00 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.23-7.45 (m, 9H), 7.59-7.61 (m, 2H), 7.90 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 17.6, 110.7, 119.9, 123.0, 123.4, 127.6, 128.5, 128.7, 128.8, 129.5, 129.6, 130.3, 131.8, 136.1, 136.2, 137.2, 143.1, 152.4 ppm. MS (ESI) m/z : 285.1 $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$.



2-Phenyl-1-*p*-tolyl-1*H*-benzo[*d*]imidazole (3c)³

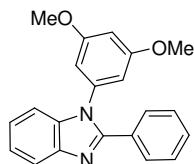
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), *N-p*-tolylbenzamidine (63.1 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{dba})_2$ (7.2 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (86% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 2.44 (s, 3H), 7.18 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.22-7.35 (m, 8H), 7.59 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.88 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 21.3, 110.6, 119.9, 123.0, 123.3, 127.3, 128.4, 129.46, 129.54, 130.2, 130.6, 134.5, 137.5, 138.7, 143.1, 152.5 ppm. MS (ESI) m/z : 285.1 $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$.



1-(Naphthalen-1-yl)-2-phenyl-1*H*-benzo[*d*]imidazole (3d)

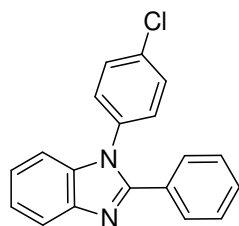
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), *N*-phenylnicotinamidine (73.8 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (99% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 6.85 (d, J = 8.0

Hz, 1H), 7.14-7.18 (m, 3H), 7.22-7.25 (m, 1H), 7.32-7.38 (m, 2H), 7.40 (d, $J = 3.6$ Hz, 2H), 7.50-7.57 (m, 4H), 7.95 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.97 (t, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 111.1, 119.9, 122.9, 123.1, 123.5, 125.8, 126.7, 127.1, 127.8, 128.4, 128.6, 128.9, 129.6, 129.8, 130.0, 130.3, 133.6, 134.6, 138.3, 143.0, 153.4$ ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{23}\text{H}_{17}\text{N}_2$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 321.1392, found: 321.1386.



1-(3,5-Dimethoxyphenyl)-2-phenyl-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3e)

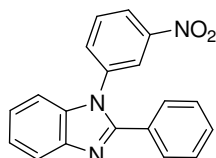
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-(3,5-dimethoxyphenyl)benzamidine (76.89 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), $t\text{BuONa}$ (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (91% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 3.72$ (s, 6H), 6.45 (d, $J = 2.0$ Hz, 2H), 6.54 (d, $J = 2.0$ Hz, 1H), 7.25-7.28 (m, 1H), 7.31-7.38 (m, 5H), 7.63 (dd, $J = 8.0, 1.6$ Hz, 2H), 7.87 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 55.7, 100.7, 105.9, 110.7, 119.9, 123.1, 123.4, 128.4, 129.4, 129.6, 137.2, 138.7, 143.1, 152.4, 161.6$ ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{21}\text{H}_{19}\text{N}_2\text{O}_2$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 331.1447, found: 331.1442.



1-(4-Chlorophenyl)-2-phenyl-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3f)⁴

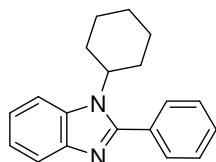
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-(4-chlorophenyl)benzamidine (69.2 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs_2CO_3 (324 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc

afforded a white solid (92% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 7.22-7.28 (m, 4H), 7.30-7.40 (m, 4H), 7.46 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.55 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.88 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 110.3, 120.1, 123.3, 123.7, 128.6, 128.7, 129.6, 129.7, 130.2, 134.5, 135.6, 137.1, 143.1, 152.4 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{14}\text{ClN}_2$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 305.0846, found: 305.0852.



1-(3-Nitrophenyl)-2-phenyl-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3g)

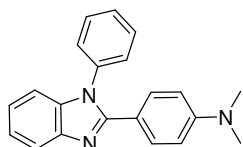
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-(3-nitrophenyl)benzamidine (72.4 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs_2CO_3 (324 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (89% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 7.25-7.27 (m, 1H), 7.30-7.38 (m, 5H), 7.50 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.57 (dd, J = 8.0, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.65 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.90 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 8.25 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 1H), 8.30 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 109.9, 120.4, 122.3, 123.3, 123.7, 124.1, 128.7, 129.3, 129.6, 130.0, 130.9, 133.5, 136.5, 138.3, 143.2, 149.1, 152.4 ppm. MS (ESI) m/z : 316.0 $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{14}\text{N}_3\text{O}_2$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 316.1086, found: 316.1083.



1-Cyclohexyl-2-phenyl-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3h)

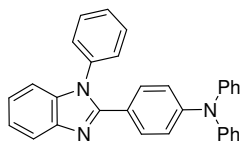
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-cyclohexylbenzamidine (60.69 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), $t\text{BuONa}$ (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc

afforded a white solid (99% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 1.26-1.38 (m, 3H), 1.75-1.76 (m, 1H), 1.92-1.98 (m, 4H), 2.30-2.38 (m, 2H), 4.32 (m, 1H), 7.24-7.29 (m, 2H), 7.51-7.55 (m, 3H), 7.63-7.65 (m, 3H), 7.81 (m, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 25.4, 26.0, 31.5, 57.1, 112.8, 120.4, 122.1, 122.2, 128.8, 129.6, 129.7, 131.3, 134.1, 143.9, 153.9 ppm. MS (ESI) m/z : 277.1 $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$.



1-Phenyl-2-(4-N,N-dimethylamino-phenyl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3i)⁵

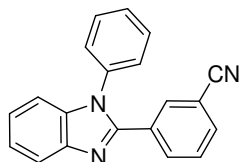
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), 4-(dimethylamino)-N-phenylbenzamidine (71.76 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (1.4 mg, 0.00625 mmol), Xantphos (3.7 mg, 0.00625 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), $t\text{BuONa}$ (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (98% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 2.95 (s, 6H), 6.57 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.16-7.22 (m, 2H), 7.26-7.29 (m, 1H), 7.33 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.44-7.53 (m, 5H), 7.83 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 40.2, 111.1, 111.5, 117.2, 119.2, 122.6, 122.7, 127.7, 128.4, 129.9, 130.6, 137.5, 137.8, 143.3, 151.0, 153.3 ppm. MS (ESI) m/z : 314.1 $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$.



1-Phenyl-2-(4-N,N-diphenylamino-phenyl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3j)⁶

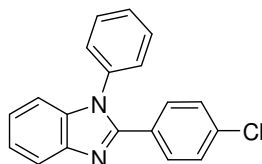
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), 4-(diphenylamino)-N-phenylbenzamidine (109.03 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), $t\text{BuONa}$ (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (81%

yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 6.91 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.03 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.08 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 4H), 7.18 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.23-7.28 (m, 5H), 7.29-7.34 (m, 1H), 7.35-7.37 (m, 2H), 7.41 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.46-7.54 (m, 3H), 7.84 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H) ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{31}\text{H}_{24}\text{N}_3$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 438.1970, found: 438.1974.



1-Phenyl-2-(3-cyanophenyl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3k)⁷

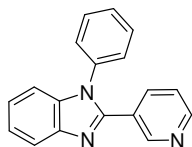
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), 3-cyano-N-phenylbenzamidine (66.4 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs_2CO_3 (324 mg, 1.0 mmol), and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (87% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 7.27 (d, J = 4.0 Hz, 1H), 7.31-7.32 (m, 3H), 7.37-7.45 (m, 2H), 7.52-7.59 (m, 3H), 7.63 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.79 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.90 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 110.8, 112.9, 118.2, 120.3, 123.6, 124.3, 127.4, 129.36, 129.37, 130.4, 131.6, 132.8, 132.9, 133.4, 136.4, 137.4, 142.9, 149.9 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{14}\text{N}_3$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 296.1188, found: 296.1190.



1-Phenyl-2-(4-chlorophenyl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3l)⁷

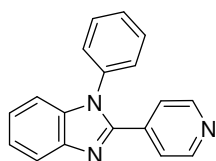
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), 4-chloro-N-phenylbenzamidine (69.2 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs_2CO_3 (324 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (86% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 7.28-7.40 (m,

7H), 7.50-7.58 (m, 5H), 7.90 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 110.6, 120.0, 123.3, 123.7, 127.5, 128.6, 128.8, 128.9, 130.1, 130.8, 135.8, 136.9, 137.4, 143.0, 151.3$ ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{14}\text{ClN}_2$ $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 305.0846, found: 305.0840.



1-Phenyl-2-(pyridin-3-yl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3m)²

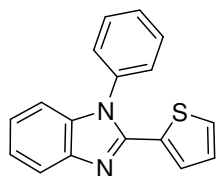
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-phenylnicotinamidinium (59.17 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs_2CO_3 (324 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (96% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 7.27\text{--}7.40$ (m, 6H), 7.50-7.57 (m, 3H), 7.91-7.95 (m, 2H), 8.58 (dd, $J = 4.8, 1.6$ Hz, 1H), 8.78 (d, $J = 2.0$ Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 110.7, 120.1, 123.2, 123.4, 124.0, 126.4, 127.5, 129.2, 130.3, 136.5, 136.6, 137.4, 143.1, 149.6, 150.1, 150.3$ ppm. MS (ESI) m/z : 272.1 $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$.



1-Phenyl-2-(pyridin-4-yl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3n)⁸

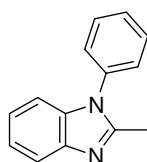
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-phenylisonicotinamidinium (59.17 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs_2CO_3 (324 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (94% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 7.25\text{--}7.27$ (m, 1H), 7.30-7.40 (m, 4H), 7.45 (d, $J = 6.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.52-7.59 (m, 3H), 7.91 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 8.56 (d, $J = 6.0$ Hz, 2H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 110.8, 120.4,$

123.2, 123.6, 124.5, 127.4, 129.3, 130.3, 136.4, 137.55, 137.56, 142.9, 149.4, 150.0 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for C₁₈H₁₄N₃ [M+H]⁺ 272.1188, found: 272.1182.



1-Phenyl-2-(thiophen-2-yl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3o)⁷

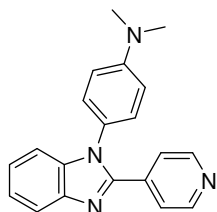
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-phenylthiophene-2-carboxamidine (60.9 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs₂CO₃ (324 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (82% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 6.85 (dd, *J* = 3.6, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 6.90 (t, *J* = 4.8 Hz, 1H), 7.06 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.21 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.29 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.35 (d, *J* = 5.6 Hz, 1H), 7.42-7.44 (m, 2H), 7.59-7.61 (m, 3H), 7.84 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 110.3, 119.6, 123.2, 123.5, 127.7, 128.3, 128.48, 128.50, 129.7, 130.3, 132.8, 136.6, 137.8, 143.0, 147.5 ppm. MS (ESI) *m/z*: 277.0 [M+H]⁺.



2-Methyl-1-phenyl-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3p)²

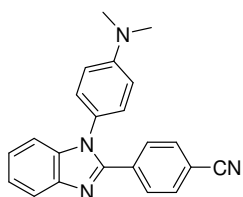
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-phenylacetamidine (40.25 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (99% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 2.28 (s, 3H), 6.88 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.94 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.01 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.12 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.28 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.50 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 14.5, 110.0, 119.1, 122.5, 122.7, 127.2, 128.9,

130.0, 136.2, 136.5, 142.7, 151.6 ppm. MS (ESI) m/z : 209.1 $[M+H]^+$.



1-(4-N,N-Dimethylamino-phenyl)-2-(pyridin-4-yl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3q)

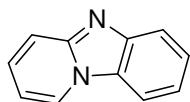
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-(4-(dimethylamino)phenyl)isonicotinamidide (72.09 mg, 0.30 mmol), $Pd(OAc)_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs_2CO_3 (324 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/ CH_2Cl_2 /EtOAc afforded a white-yellow solid (93% yield). 1H NMR (600 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 3.06 (s, 6H), 6.78 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.14 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 7.22 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.28 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (t, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.53 (d, J = 6.0 Hz, 2H), 7.88 (d, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 8.56 (d, J = 6.0 Hz, 2H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (150 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 40.5, 111.1, 112.8, 120.2, 123.2, 123.3, 124.1, 124.5, 128.1, 138.0, 138.4, 142.8, 149.7, 150.0, 150.7 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $C_{20}H_{19}N_4[M+H]^+$ 315.1610, found: 315.1616.



1-(4-N,N-Dimethylamino-phenyl)-2-(4-cyanophenyl)-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (3r)

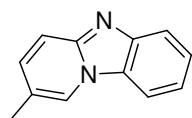
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), 4-cyano-N-(4-(dimethylamino)phenyl)benzamidide (79.3 mg, 0.30 mmol), $Pd(OAc)_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs_2CO_3 (324 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (91% yield). 1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 3.06 (s, 6H), 6.76 (d, J = 8.8 Hz,

2H), 7.12 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 7.23-7.36 (m, 3H), 7.59 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.76 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.87 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 40.5$, 111.1, 112.7, 112.8, 118.7, 120.1, 123.3, 124.0, 124.6, 128.1, 129.8, 132.1, 134.9, 138.3, 142.9, 150.4, 150.6 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{22}\text{H}_{19}\text{N}_4[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 339.1610, found: 339.1607.



Pyrido[1,2-*a*]benzimidazole (3s)⁹

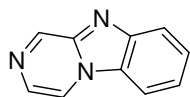
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), 2-aminopyridine (28.2 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), K_3PO_4 (106 mg, 0.5 mmol), $t\text{BuONa}$ (48 mg, 0.5 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/ CH_2Cl_2 /acetone afforded a white solid (86% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 6.82$ (t, $J = 6.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.35-7.42 (m, 2H), 7.51 (t, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 7.68 (d, $J = 9.2$ Hz, 1H), 7.88 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 7.93 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 8.43 (d, $J = 6.8$ Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 110.4$, 110.5, 118.2, 120.1, 121.1, 125.3, 125.8, 128.8, 129.4, 144.6, 148.6 ppm. MS (ESI) m/z : 169.1 $[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$.



2-Methylbenzo[4,5]imidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3t)⁹

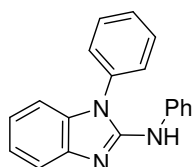
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), 5-methyl-2-aminopyridine (32.4 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), K_3PO_4 (106 mg, 0.5 mmol), $t\text{BuONa}$ (48 mg, 0.5 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/ EtOAc afforded a white solid (92% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 2.35$ (s, 3H), 7.21 (d, $J = 9.2$ Hz, 1H), 7.28 (t, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 7.45 (t, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 1H), 7.55 (d, $J = 9.2$ Hz, 1H), 7.78 (d, $J = 9.2$ Hz, 1H), 7.88 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 1H), 8.14 (s, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 18.0$, 110.2, 117.1, 119.7,

119.8, 120.6, 122.5, 125.2, 128.5, 132.5, 144.5, 147.6 ppm. MS (ESI) m/z : 183.1[M+H]⁺.



Benzo[4,5]imidazo[1,2-*a*]pyrazine (3u)

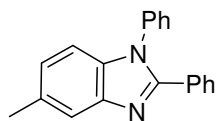
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), 2-aminopyrazine (29 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), K₃PO₄ (106 mg, 0.5 mmol), *t*BuONa (48 mg, 0.5 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (87% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 7.50 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.63 (t, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.97 (d, J = 2.8 Hz, 1H), 7.99 (s, 1H), 8.06 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 8.36 (d, J = 4.0 Hz, 1H), 9.30 (s, 1H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 111.2, 117.9, 121.6, 123.3, 127.16, 127.20, 127.8, 142.2, 144.3, 145.8 ppm. MS (ESI) m/z : 170.1 [M+H]⁺.



1-Phenyl-2-phenylamino-1H-benzo[*d*]imidazole (3v)¹⁰

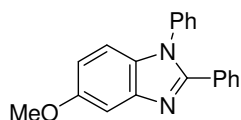
1,2-Dibromobenzene (58.98 mg, 0.25 mmol), 1,3-diphenylguanidine (63.4 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), K₃PO₄ (106 mg, 0.5 mmol), *t*BuONa (48 mg, 0.5 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (84% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 6.30 (br, 1H), 7.01-7.05 (m, 2H), 7.07 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.20 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.50 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.56 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.64 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 5H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 108.4, 117.6, 118.3, 121.0, 122.3, 122.6, 127.5, 129.3, 129.4, 130.8, 134.56, 134.61, 139.3, 142.4, 149.1

ppm. MS (ESI) m/z : 286.1 $[M+H]^+$.



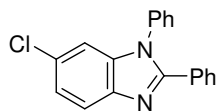
5-Methyl-1,2-diphenyl-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (4a)¹¹

2-Bromo-1-chloro-4-methylbenzene (51.37 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-phenylbenzamidine (59 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (95% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 2.52 (s, 3H), 7.08 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.13 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 7.27-7.36 (m, 5H), 7.43-7.50 (m, 3H), 7.55 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.67 (s, 1H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (150 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 21.7, 110.1, 119.7, 124.9, 127.5, 128.4, 128.5, 129.4, 129.6, 129.9, 130.2, 132.8, 135.5, 137.3, 143.5, 152.5 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for C₂₀H₁₇N₂ $[M+H]^+$ 285.1392, found: 285.1386.



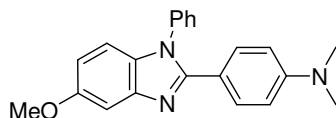
5-Methoxy-1,2-diphenyl-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (4b)

2-Bromo-1-chloro-4-methoxybenzene (55.37 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-phenylbenzamidine (59 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(dba)₂ (7.2 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (97% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 3.90 (s, 3H), 6.89 (dd, J = 8.8 Hz, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.12 (d, J = 8.8 Hz, 1H), 7.27-7.36 (m, 6H), 7.44-7.50 (m, 3H), 7.54 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 2H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 56.0, 102.0, 111.0, 113.5, 126.9, 127.5, 128.4, 128.6, 129.5, 130.0, 130.2, 132.1, 137.2, 143.9, 152.7, 156.9 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for C₂₀H₁₇N₂O $[M+H]^+$ 301.1341, found: 301.1335.



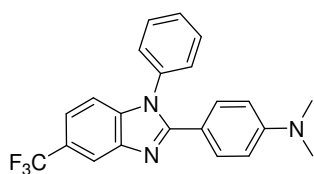
6-Chloro-1,2-diphenyl-1H-benzo[d]imidazole (4c)

1-Bromo-2,4-dichlorobenzene (56.5 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-phenylbenzamidine (59 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs₂CO₃ (324 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (81% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 7.23 (s, 1H), 7.29-7.38 (m, 6H), 7.49-7.58 (m, 5H), 7.77 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H) ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for C₁₉H₁₄ClN₂[M+H]⁺ 305.0846, found: 305.0855.



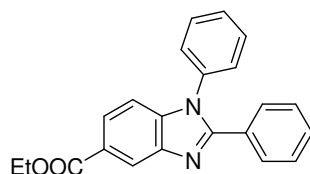
1-Phenyl-2-(4-N,N-dimethylamino-phenyl)-1H-5-methoxy-benzo[d]imidazole (4d)

2-Bromo-1-chloro-4-methoxybenzene (55.37 mg, 0.25 mmol), 4-(dimethylamino)-N-phenylbenzamidine (71.76 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(dba)₂ (7.2 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (94% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 3.04 (s, 6H), 3.88 (s, 3H), 6.75 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.91 (dd, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 7.08-7.13 (m, 3H), 7.33 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 7.49 (d, *J* = 5.6 Hz, 2H), 8.54 (d, *J* = 5.6 Hz, 2H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 40.3, 55.7, 101.5, 111.3, 112.6, 114.4, 122.8, 124.4, 127.8, 130.8, 133.0, 137.8, 143.3, 149.4, 149.8, 150.5, 156.8 ppm. MS (ESI) *m/z*: 344.1 [M+H]⁺.



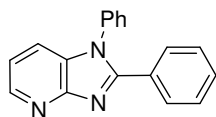
1-Phenyl-2-(4-N,N-dimethylamino-phenyl)-1*H*-5-trifluoromethyl-benzo[*d*]imidazole (4e)

2-Bromo-1-chloro-4-(trifluoromethyl)benzene (64.86 mg, 0.25 mmol), 4-(dimethylamino)-*N*-phenylbenzamidine (71.76 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs₂CO₃ (324 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (96% yield). ¹H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 2.97 (s, 6H), 6.57 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 7.21 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.33 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.42-7.44 (m, 3H), 7.49-7.56 (m, 3H), 8.10 (s, 1H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (150 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 40.1, 110.4, 111.6, 116.2, 116.8, 119.4, 124.1, 125.1, 125.3, 125.9, 127.6, 129.0, 130.2, 130.7, 137.2, 139.4, 142.8, 151.3, 155.3 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for C₂₂H₁₉F₃N₃ [M+H]⁺ 382.1531, found: 382.1524.



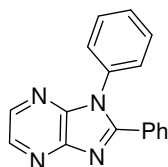
Ethyl 1,2-diphenyl-1*H*-benzo[*d*]imidazole-5-carboxylate (4f)

Ethyl 3-bromo-4-chlorobenzoate (66 mg, 0.25 mmol), *N*-phenylbenzamidine (59 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs₂CO₃ (324 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (90% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.37 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 4.35 (q, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 7.29-7.40 (m, 5H), 7.49-7.59 (m, 5H), 7.87 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.96 (s, 1H), 8.05 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 14.5, 61.1, 112.9, 119.5, 124.6, 125.7, 127.6, 128.5, 129.1, 129.5, 129.7, 130.1, 130.2, 136.6, 137.2, 146.5, 155.1, 167.1 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for C₂₂H₁₉N₂O₂ [M+H]⁺ 343.1447, found: 343.1439.



1,2-Diphenyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyridine (4g)¹²

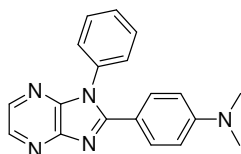
2-Bromo-3-chloropyridine (48.11 mg, 0.25 mmol), *N*-phenylbenzamidine (59 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/CH₂Cl₂/EtOAc afforded a white solid (92% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 7.29 (m, 3H), 7.37 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 7.45-7.52 (m, 3H), 7.58 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 8.14 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 8.39 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 1H) ppm. MS (ESI) *m/z*: 272.1 [M+H]⁺.



1,2-Diphenyl-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyrazine (4h)

2,3-Dichloropyrazine (37.25 mg, 0.25 mmol), *N*-phenylbenzamidine (59 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/CH₂Cl₂/EtOAc afforded a yellow solid (86% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 7.34-7.39 (m, 4H), 7.42 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.53 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 3H), 7.68 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 8.31 (d, *J* = 2.0 Hz, 1H), 8.59 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H) ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for C₁₇H₁₃N₄ [M+H]⁺ 273.1140, found: 273.1144.

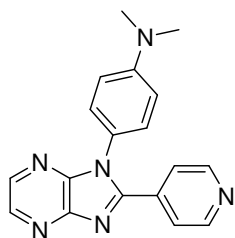
Exact Mass:



1-Phenyl-2-(4-*N,N*-dimethylamino-phenyl)-1*H*-imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyrazine (4i)

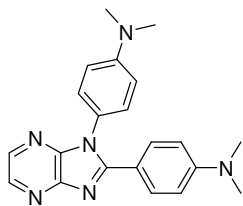
2,3-Dichloropyrazine (37.25 mg, 0.25 mmol),

4-(dimethylamino)-N-phenylbenzamidine (71.76 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/CH₂Cl₂/EtOAc afforded a yellow solid (88% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 2.99 (s, 6H), 6.56 (d, *J* = 9.2 Hz, 2H), 7.40 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.49-7.59 (m, 5H), 8.17 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 8.46 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 40.1, 111.3, 115.3, 127.8, 129.2, 130.0, 131.3, 135.7, 137.4, 140.2, 143.3, 149.7, 151.9, 157.4 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for C₁₉H₁₈N₅[M+H]⁺ 316.1562, found: 317.1558.



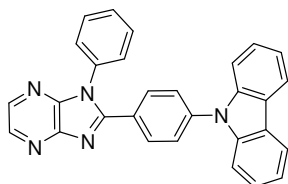
1-(4-N,N-Dimethylamino-phenyl)-2-(pyridin-4-yl)-1H-imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyrazine (4j)

2,3-Dichloropyrazine (37.25 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-(4-(dimethylamino)phenyl)isonicotinamidine (72.1 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/CH₂Cl₂/EtOAc afforded a yellow solid (90% yield). ¹H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 3.06 (s, 6H), 6.80 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 7.18 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 7.65 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 2H), 8.36 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 8.61 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H), 8.64 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 2H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (150 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 40.5, 112.9, 122.0, 123.4, 128.2, 136.8, 139.9, 141.4, 143.3, 148.6, 150.3, 151.2, 153.5 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for C₁₈H₁₇N₆[M+H]⁺ 317.1515, found: 317.1512.



1,2-Di(4-N,N-dimethylamino-phenyl)-1H-imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyrazine (4k)

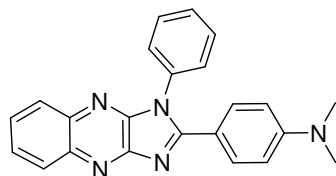
2,3-Dichloropyrazine (37.25 mg, 0.25 mmol), 4-(dimethylamino)-N-(4-(dimethylamino)phenyl)benzamidine (84.714 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/CH₂Cl₂/EtOAc afforded a yellow solid (79% yield). ¹H NMR (600 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 2.99 (s, 6H), 3.03 (s, 6H), 6.59 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 6.80 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 7.21 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 7.70 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 8.15 (d, *J* = 3.0 Hz, 1H), 8.42 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (150 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 40.1, 40.5, 111.3, 113.0, 115.9, 123.8, 128.4, 131.2, 137.3, 139.8, 143.9, 149.7, 150.7, 151.8, 157.5 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for C₂₁H₂₃N₆[M+H]⁺ 359.1984, found: 359.1992.



9-(4-(1-Phenyl-1H-imidazo[4,5-*b*]pyrazin-2-yl)phenyl)-9H-carbazole (4l)

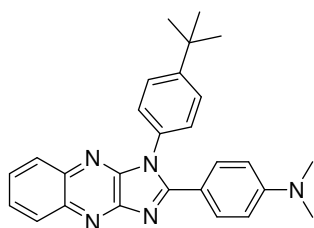
2,3-Dichloropyrazine (37.25 mg, 0.25 mmol), 4-(9H-carbazol-9-yl)-N-phenylbenzamidine (108.4 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/CH₂Cl₂/EtOAc afforded a yellow solid (82% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 7.29 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 7.40-7.50 (m, 6H), 7.57-7.65 (m, 5H), 7.94 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 8.12 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 8.35 (d, *J* = 2.8 Hz, 1H), 8.62 (d, *J* = 2.4 Hz, 1H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (150 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 109.9, 120.6, 120.7, 123.9, 126.3, 126.7, 127.3, 127.8, 129.7, 130.3, 131.5, 134.8, 139.1,

140.3, 140.4, 141.2, 142.9, 149.1, 155.5 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $C_{29}H_{20}N_5$ $[M+H]^+$ 438.1719, found: 438.1722.



1-Phenyl-2-(4-N,N-dimethylamino-phenyl)-1H-imidazo[4,5-*b*]quinoxaline (4m)

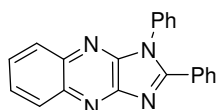
2,3-Dibromoquinoxaline (72 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-phenyl-4-(dimethylamino)benzamidine (73.9 mg, 0.30 mmol), $Pd(OAc)_2$ (5.6 mg, 0.025 mmol), Xantphos (14.6 mg, 0.025 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/ CH_2Cl_2 /EtOAc afforded a yellow solid (85% yield). 1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 3.03 (s, 6H), 6.59 (d, J = 9.2 Hz, 2H), 7.49 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.56-7.64 (m, 4H), 7.68 (d, J = 9.2 Hz, 3H), 8.02 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 8.22 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H) ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $C_{23}H_{20}N_5$ $[M+H]^+$ 366.1719, found: 366.1721.



1-(4-*Tert*-butylphenyl)-2-(4-N,N-dimethylamino-phenyl)-1H-imidazo[4,5-*b*]quinoxaline (4n)

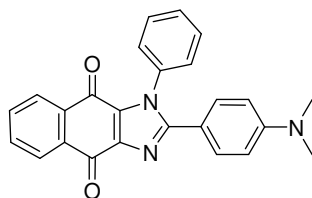
2,3-Dibromoquinoxaline (72 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-(4-*tert*-butylphenyl)-4-(dimethylamino)benzamidine (88.6 mg, 0.30 mmol), $Pd(OAc)_2$ (5.6 mg, 0.025 mmol), Xantphos (14.6 mg, 0.025 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/ CH_2Cl_2 /EtOAc afforded a yellow solid (88% yield). 1H NMR (400 MHz, $CDCl_3$): δ = 1.42 (s, 9H), 3.03 (s,

6H), 6.59 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 7.39 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 2H), 7.58 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 2H), 7.62 (t, $J = 9.2$ Hz, 2H), 7.69 (d, $J = 8.8$ Hz, 2H), 8.03 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 8.22 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 31.4, 34.9, 40.0, 111.1, 115.2, 126.9, 127.2, 127.3, 127.5, 128.2, 129.3, 131.8, 133.0, 139.8, 141.8, 144.6, 150.5, 152.1, 152.3, 162.6$ ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{27}\text{H}_{28}\text{N}_5[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 422.2345, found: 422.2339.



1,2-Diphenyl-1H-imidazo[4,5-*b*]quinoxaline (4o)

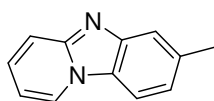
2,3-Dichloroquinoxaline (49.75 mg, 0.25 mmol), N-phenylbenzamidine (59 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (5.6 mg, 0.025 mmol), Xantphos (14.6 mg, 0.025 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (96 mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (2 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/ CH_2Cl_2 /EtOAc afforded a yellow solid (81% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 7.37$ (t, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 2H), 7.45-7.50 (m, 3H), 7.52-7.59 (m, 3H), 7.66-7.74 (m, 2H), 7.77 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 2H), 8.08 (d, $J = 8.0$ Hz, 1H), 8.29 (d, $J = 8.4$ Hz, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): $\delta = 127.9, 128.0, 128.4, 128.5, 128.7, 128.9, 129.3, 129.8, 130.0, 130.4, 131.7, 135.1, 140.4, 142.1, 143.8, 149.9, 161.9$ ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{21}\text{H}_{15}\text{N}_4[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 323.1297, found: 323.1300.



2-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-1-phenyl-1H-naphtho[2,3-*d*]imidazole-4,9-dione (4p)¹³

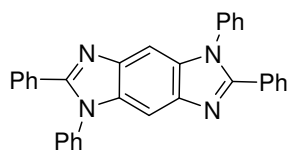
2,3-Dichloronaphthalene-1,4-dione (56.8 mg, 0.25 mmol), 4-(dimethylamino)-N-phenylbenzamidine (71.76 mg, 0.30 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), Cs_2CO_3 (324

mg, 1.0 mmol) and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (91% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 2.95 (s, 6H), 6.50 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.39-7.42 (m, 4H), 7.52-7.59 (m, 3H), 7.65 (m, 2H), 8.00 (dd, *J* = 7.2, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 8.26 (dd, *J* = 7.2, 1.2 Hz, 1H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 40.1, 111.2, 114.5, 126.5, 127.0, 127.8, 129.7, 129.8, 130.7, 132.9, 133.5, 133.6, 133.6, 136.9, 144.1, 151.4, 154.9, 175.1, 179.8 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for C₂₅H₂₀N₃O₂[M+H]⁺ 394.1556, found: 394.1559.



7-Methylbenzo[4,5]imidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (4q)⁹

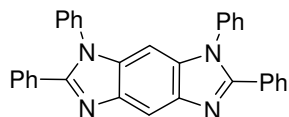
2-Bromo-1-chloro-4-methylbenzene (51.37 mg, 0.25 mmol), 2-aminopyridine (28.2 mg, 0.30 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), sieve (100 mg), K₃PO₄ (106 mg, 0.5 mmol), *t*BuONa (48 mg, 0.5 mmol) and toluene (1 mL). Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (91% yield). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 2.51 (s, 3H), 6.95 (t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 7.18 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.50 (t, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 1H), 7.60 (s, 1H), 7.62 (d, *J* = 9.2 Hz, 1H), 8.16 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 9.02 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H) ppm. ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆): δ = 22.0, 110.5, 111.9, 117.3, 118.9, 122.6, 127.2, 127.4, 130.2, 135.2, 144.9, 148.3 ppm. MS (ESI) *m/z*: 183.0[M+H]⁺.



1,2,5,6-Tetraphenyl-1,5-dihydrobenzo[1,2-*d*:4,5-*d'*]diimidazole (5a)¹⁴

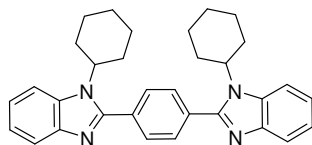
1,4-Dibromo-2,5-diiodobenzene (122 mg, 0.25 mmol), *N*-phenylbenzamidine (118 mg, 0.60 mmol), Pd(OAc)₂ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (192 mg, 2.0 mmol) and toluene (2 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc

afforded a white solid (88% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 7.28-7.35 (m, 6H), 7.38 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 4H), 7.47-7.55 (m, 6H), 7.60 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 4H), 7.67 (s, 2H) ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{32}\text{H}_{23}\text{N}_4[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 463.1923, found: 463.1922.



1,2,6,7-Tetraphenyl-1,7-dihydrobenzo[1,2-*d*:4,5-*d'*]diimidazole (5b)¹⁵

1,5-Dibromo-2,4-diiodobenzene (122 mg, 0.25 mmol), *N*-phenylbenzamidine (118 mg, 0.60 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (2.8 mg, 0.0125 mmol), Xantphos (7.3 mg, 0.0125 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (192 mg, 2.0 mmol), and toluene (1 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/EtOAc afforded a white solid (85% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 6.95 (s, 1H), 7.28-7.36 (m, 10H), 7.41-7.49 (m, 6H), 7.55 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 4H), 8.36 (s, 1H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 90.2, 109.4, 127.7, 128.4, 128.6, 129.5, 129.6, 130.1, 130.2, 135.9, 137.5, 140.8, 153.3 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $\text{C}_{32}\text{H}_{23}\text{N}_4[\text{M}+\text{H}]^+$ 463.1923, found: 463.1920.



1-Cyclohexyl-2-(4-(1-cyclohexyl-1*H*-benzo[*d*]imidazol-2-yl)phenyl)-1*H*-benzo[*d*]imidazole (6a)

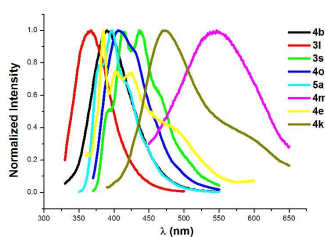
1,2-Dibromobenzene (141.54 mg, 0.6 mmol), N^1, N^4 -dicyclohexylterephthalamidine (81.62 mg, 0.25 mmol), $\text{Pd}(\text{OAc})_2$ (5.6 mg, 0.025 mmol), Xantphos (14.6 mg, 0.025 mmol), 4 Å sieve (100 mg), *t*BuONa (192 mg, 2.0 mmol) and toluene (2 mL) at 140 °C for 24 h. Purification via silica gel column chromatography using petroleum ether/ CH_2Cl_2 /EtOAc afforded a white solid (83% yield). ^1H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 1.33-1.41 (m, 6H), 1.79-1.81 (m, 2H), 1.93-2.07 (m, 8H), 2.32-2.41 (m, 4H), 4.38 (t, J = 12.0 Hz, 2H), 7.29-7.31 (m, 4H), 7.69-7.71 (m, 2H), 7.80 (s, 4H), 7.83-7.85 (m, 2H) ppm. ^{13}C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl_3): δ = 25.5, 26.0, 31.7, 57.4, 112.9, 120.5, 122.3,

122.6, 130.0, 132.6, 134.1, 143.9, 153.1 ppm. HR-MS (ESI) calcd for $C_{32}H_{35}N_4[M+H]^+$ 475.2862, found: 475.2858.

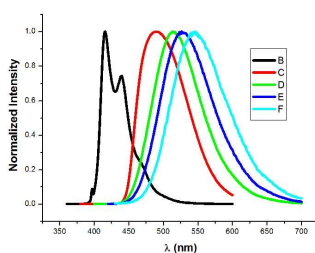
VII. Absorption and Fluorescence emission spectroscopy

Table S2: The UV absorption and fluorescence emission maximum of selected benzimidazoles in CH_3CN .

Compd.	$\lambda_{abs}/\lambda_{em}$ [nm]	Stokes shift [nm]	Compd.	$\lambda_{abs}/\lambda_{em}$ [nm]	Stokes shift [nm]
4b	268/391	123	4k	371/472	101
4o	348/409	61	4j	309/405	96
3l	295/367	72	4e	332/406	74
3j	339/444	105	3q	299/556	257
5a	330/397	67	3i	325/397	72
4i	371/477	106	3r	308/586	278
4m	411/528	117	4n	411/529	118
4l	339/490	151	3s	344/414	70



Figures S1. The fluorescent emission spectra of selected benzimidazoles in CH_3CN , excited at the absorption maximum (Signal intensities have been normalized).



Figures S2. The fluorescent emissions spectra of **4m** in different solvents, excited at the excitation maximum (Signal intensities have been normalized). From left to right: hexane, CH_2Cl_2 , acetone, CH_3CN , and DMSO. Excitation and emission slit widths were 1.0 nm and 1.0 nm, respectively.

VIII. Cell culture experiments and imaging of living-cell

The human hepatocellular carcinoma cells (SMMC-7721) and human lung adenocarcinoma epithelial cells (A549) lines were purchased from American Type Culture Collection. One day before imaging, cells were seeded in 8 tissue culture wells. Then cells were cultured following ATCC protocols and maintained at 37 °C, 5% CO₂ atmosphere in Duplecco's Minimum Essential Medium (DMEM) medium (containing 1% dimethylsulfoxide) supplemented with 10% FBS, 2 mM L-glutamine, 100 units/mL of penicillin, and 100 mg/mL of streptomycin overnight. For imaging experiments, live cells were coincubated with donor-acceptor 1,2-disubstituted (hetero)aryl fused imidazoles (20 μM) in DMEM without PBS for 40 min at 37 °C. The cells were then washed twice with culture medium. Fluorescence images were observed with a Fluorescence Inverted Microscope (IX71, OLYMPUS) by excitation of SMMC-7721 and A549 cells with UV-light (300-450 nm) and photographed by using Spot Flex. Worthy of note is that there were not obvious cell necrosis when the live cells were coincubated with 1,2-disubstituted (hetero)aryl fused imidazoles. It implied that these compounds exhibited relatively low toxicity to cultured cells.

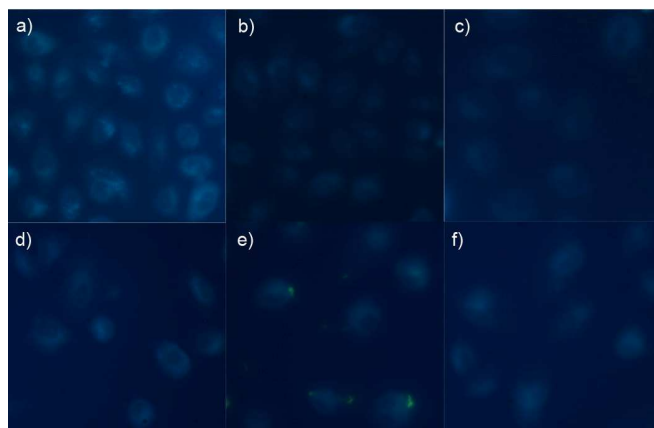


Figure S3. a) Fluorescence image of SMMC-7721 cells incubated with **4m** (20 μM). b) Fluorescence image of SMMC-7721 cells incubated with **4n** (20 μM). c) Fluorescence image of SMMC-7721 cells incubated with **3r** (20 μM). d) Fluorescence image of A549 cells incubated with **4m** (20 μM). e) Fluorescence image of A549 cells incubated with **4n** (20 μM). f) Fluorescence image of A549 cells incubated with **4i** (20 μM).

IX. References

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X. Copies of ^1H NMR and ^{13}C NMR spectra

