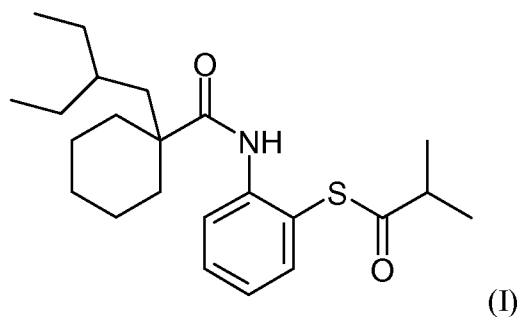


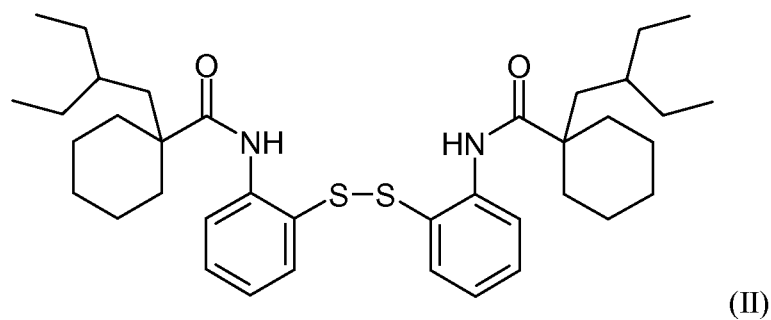
Novel process

The present invention relates to a process for the preparation of S-[2-[1-(2-ethylbutyl)cyclohexylcarbonylamino]-phenyl] 2-methylthiopropionate which is a useful pharmaceutically active compound.

In a first aspect, the present invention provides a process for the preparation of compound of
5 formula (I):



which comprises reacting a compound of formula (II)



with isobutyric anhydride and a reducing agent such as a phosphine, phosphinite,
10 phosphonite or phosphite.

Preferably the reducing agent is triisopropylphosphite, triphenylphosphine or tributylphosphine, more preferably triphenylphosphine or tributylphosphine, most preferably triphenylphosphine.

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Preferably the reductive acylation is carried out in the presence of at least 0.1(mol/L) of the reducing agent as described before.

In another embodiment of the invention, the excess of phosphine, phosphite, phosphinite or phosphinite may be oxidized by an oxidizing agent, such as Oxone® (known as potassium
5 peroxomonosulfate or potassium monopersulfate triple salt) or hydrogen peroxide. Most preferably the oxidizing agent is hydrogen peroxide.

In a preferred embodiment, the acylation is followed by the removal of the respective phosphine oxide, phosphate, phosphinate or phosphonate with water/alcohol extraction from organic solvent.

10 Unless otherwise stated, the following terms used in the specification and claims have the meanings given below:

“(C₁₋₈)alkyl” refers to a branched or straight hydrocarbon chain containing from 1 to 8 carbon atoms, such as methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, isopropyl, n-butyl, isobutyl, sec-butyl and t-butyl, pentyl, hexyl, heptyl or octyl. (C₁₋₆)alkyl is preferred.

15 “(C₁₋₆)alkoxy” means a moiety of the formula –OR^a, wherein R^a is an (C₁₋₆)alkyl moiety as defined herein. Examples of alkoxy moieties include, but are not limited to, methoxy, ethoxy, isopropoxy, and the like.

“alcohol” refers to a an (C₁₋₈)alkyl as defined above substituted by an hydroxy group. Examples of alcohols include, but are not limited to, methanol, ethanol, isopropanol,

20 propanol and butanol. Methanol is preferred.

“(C₃₋₈)cycloalkyl” refers to a single saturated carbocyclic ring containing from 3 to 8 carbon atoms, such as cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl, cycloheptyl and cyclooctyl.

“phenyl(C₁₋₃)alkyl” refers to the group R^{8ac}-R^{8ad}-, wherein R^{ac} and R^{ad} are , respectively, “optionally substituted phenyl” and “(C₁₋₃)alkyl” as defined above.

25 “phosphine” refers to a compound of formula PR₃, wherein each “R” may be the same or different and is independently selected from (C₁₋₆)alkyl, (C₃₋₆)cycloalkyl, phenyl or phenyl(C₁₋₃)alkyl as defined above. Representative examples include, but are not limited to,

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triphenylphosphine, tricyclopentylphosphine, tricyclohexylphosphine, tributylphosphine, diethylphenylphosphine or tribenzylphosphine. Most preferably the phosphine is triphenylphosphine.

“phosphinite” refers to a compound of formula $P(OR)R_2$, wherein each R may be the same or different and is independently selected from (C_{1-6}) alkyl, (C_{3-6}) cycloalkyl, phenyl or phenyl (C_{1-3}) alkyl as defined above. Representative examples include, but are not limited to P,P-diphenyl-phosphinous acid phenyl ester.

“phosphonite” refers to a compound of formula $P(OR)_2R$, wherein each R may be the same or different and is independently selected from (C_{1-6}) alkyl, (C_{3-6}) cycloalkyl, phenyl or phenyl (C_{1-3}) alkyl as defined above. Representative examples include, but are not limited to P-phenyl-phosphonous acid diphenyl ester.

“phosphite” refers to a compound of formula $P(OR)_3$, wherein each R may be the same or different and is independently selected from (C_{1-6}) alkyl, (C_{3-6}) cycloalkyl, phenyl or phenyl (C_{1-3}) alkyl as defined above. Most preferably the phosphite is triisopropylphosphite.

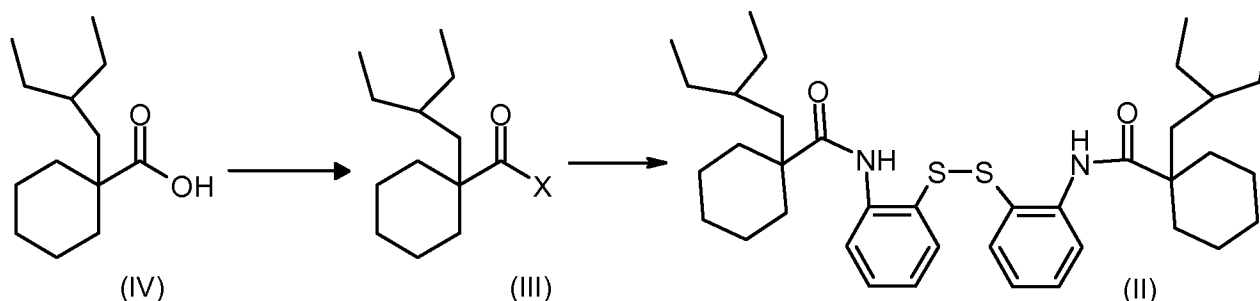
Unless otherwise stated, organic solvent used for reactions referred herein comprises ether like solvent (e.g. tetrahydrofuran, methyltetrahydrofuran, diisopropyl ether, t-butylmethyl ether or dibutyl ether, dimethyl acetal or dioxane), ester-like solvent (e.g. ethyl acetate, butyl acetate), aliphatic hydrocarbon solvent (e.g. hexane, heptane or pentane), saturated alicyclic hydrocarbon solvent (e.g. cyclohexane or cyclopentane) or aromatic solvent (e.g. toluene or t-butyl-benzene) or nitriles (e.g. acetonitrile) or amides (e.g. dimethylformamide, N-methylpyrrolidine) or chlorinated solvents (e.g. dichloromethane) or dimethyl sulfoxide. Most preferably the solvent for reactions is heptane or toluene.

Unless otherwise stated, organic solvent used for extractions referred herein comprises ether like solvent (e.g. methyltetrahydrofuran, diisopropyl ether, t-butylmethyl ether or dibutyl ether, dimethyl acetal or dioxane), ester-like solvent (e.g. ethyl acetate, butyl acetate), aliphatic hydrocarbon solvent (e.g. hexane, heptane or pentane), saturated alicyclic hydrocarbon solvent (e.g. cyclohexane or cyclopentane) or aromatic solvent (e.g. toluene or t-butyl-benzene). Most preferably the solvent for extractions is heptane.

Compound of formula (II) can be prepared according to scheme 1:

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Scheme 1.



wherein X is I, Br, Cl or F. In particular, the process comprises reacting a

- 5 cyclohexanecarboxylic acid derivative of formula (IV) with a halogenating agent, such as PX_3 , PX_5 , SOX_2 or NCX , to obtain the acyl halide of formula (III). The halogenating step is preferably carried out in the presence of tri-(C_1 - C_5)alkylamine. Furthermore, the process comprises reacting acyl halide with bis(2-aminophenyl)disulfide to acylate the amino groups of the bis(2-aminophenyl)disulfide in the presence of a base (eg. N-methylmorpholine, di-N-methylpiperazine, pyridine) .
- 10

Preferably the halogenating agent is chosen from thionyl chloride, phosphorus pentachloride, oxalyl chloride, phosgene, diphosgene, triphosgene, phosphorus tribromide and cyanuric fluoride, cyanuric chloride, most preferably thionyl chloride and phosgene. The acyl halide of formula (III) wherein X is Cl is most preferred.

- 15 Furthermore the invention may comprise the crystallization step as described herein.

- S-[2-[1-(2-Ethylbutyl)cyclohexylcarbonylamino]-phenyl] 2-methylthiopropionate (thioester) can be crystallized by a combined cooling and solvent-anti-solvent process. Solvent and anti-solvent should be miscible. Both addition modes – anti-solvent to thioester solution (preferred) or thioester solution to anti-solvent – are possible. With water as anti-solvent,
- 20 suitable solvents include but are not restricted to acetone, ethanol, isopropanol, propanol .Most preferably, the thioester is crystallized from ethanol (solvent) and water (anti-solvent).

For the crystallization, the thioester is dissolved at elevated temperature in ethanol (preferably between 40°C and 70°C) and is cooled until supersaturation is achieved

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- (preferably to room temperature). Thioester seed crystals are added, preferably as a suspension in EtOH/water 1:1 (m/m). After seeding, the suspension is aged for an appropriate time (preferably 60 minutes). Subsequently and while stirring water is added, until the desired ethanol to water ratio is achieved (preferentially ethanol : water = 7 : 3 (m/m)). After
- 5 complete addition the crystallization mixture is stirred, for about 30 min, and then cooled to the final temperature (preferentially -10°C) and further aged at this temperature. The crystals are isolated by filtration, washed with a mixture of ethanol-water (preferably EtOH : water 3:1 (m/m)). Subsequently the wet crystals are dried, most preferably at 40°C, under reduced pressure until the weight is constant
- 10 Alternatively, the mode of addition can be changed. The hot solution of thioester in ethanol is added to the water phase preferably containing thioester seed crystals. In this case, the ethanol:water ratio can be smaller than 7:3 (m/m), preferable 6:4 (m/m) or even smaller. The suspension is further processed as described above.

The thioester can also be crystallized by cooling a solution of thioester in a non polar solvent

15 such as hexane(s), cyclohexane, heptane, pentane. Most preferably, the thioester is crystallized from heptane.

In another embodiment, the invention further comprises the following steps:

- a) forming a solution of compound of formula (I) in acetone, ethanol, isopropanol or propanol at a temperature of 40°C to 70°C;
- 20 b) cooling the solution until supersaturation, preferably to room temperature; (wherein supersaturation is well understood by the person skilled in the art, see J.W. Mullin, "Crystallization", fourth edition, Butterworth-Heinemann, 2001, ISBN 0 7506 4833 3, pages 123-131);
- c) adding seed crystals of compound of formula (I);
- 25 d) optionally aging the suspension, preferably for at least 10 min, most preferably for 60 minutes;

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- e) adding water while stirring until the desired solvent/water ratio is obtained, preferably the solvent/water ratio is between 9:1 and 1 to 9, more preferably 8:2 and 2:8 most preferably 7:3 (m/m);
- f) optionally further stirring the crystallization mixture;
- 5 g) cooling the crystallization mixture to a temperature below 0°C, more preferably between 0°C and -20°C, most preferably to -10°C, to effect the crystallization and precipitation of compound of formula (I) from the solution thereof,
- h) separating the crystalline compound of formula (I) from the liquid component of the mixture, preferably the crystalline compound of formula (I) is filtered out.
- 10 The starting materials and reagents, which do not have their synthetic route explicitly disclosed herein, are generally available from commercial sources or are readily prepared using methods well known to the person skilled in the art. For instance, the compound of formula (IV) can be prepared according to the procedures described in Shinkai et al., J. Med. Chem. 43:3566-3572 (2000), WO 2007/051714 or WO 2008/074677.
- 15 In general, the nomenclature used in this Application is based on AUTONOMTM 2000, a Beilstein Institute computerized system for the generation of IUPAC systematic nomenclature. Chemical structures shown herein were prepared using MDL ISISTM version 2.5 SP2. Any open valency appearing on a carbon, oxygen or nitrogen atom in the structures herein indicates the presence of a hydrogen atom.
- 20 The following examples are provided for the purpose of further illustration and are not intended to limit the scope of the claimed invention.

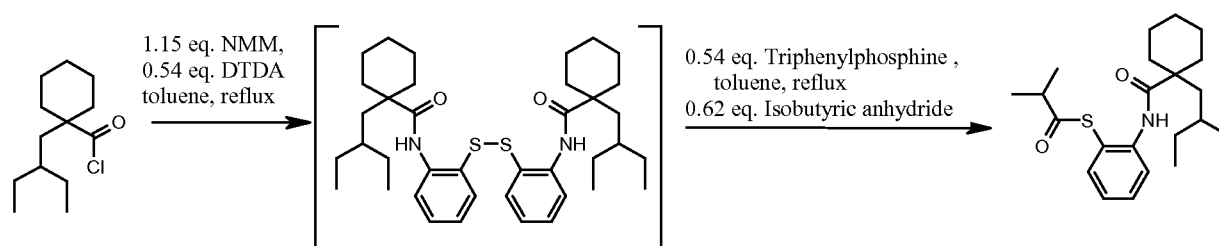
The following abbreviations and definitions are used: Ar (argon); acid chloride (1-(2-ethylbutyl)-cyclohexanecarbonyl chloride);amidodisulfide (N,N'-(dithiodi-2,1-phenylene)bis[1-(2-ethylbutyl)-cyclohexanecarboxamide]); amidothiophenol (1-(2-ethylbutyl)-N-(2-mercaptophenyl)-cyclohexanecarboxamide); thioester (S-[2-[1-(2-ethylbutyl)cyclohexanecarbonylamino]-phenyl] 2-methylthiopropionate); DTDA (2,2'-dithiodianiline); eq. (equivalent); g (gram); EtOH (ethanol); IPC (in process control); GC (gas chromatography); h (hour); M (Molarity [moles/L]); MeOH (methanol); ml (milliliter);

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- NMM(N-methylmorpholine); RT (room temperature); TBP (tributylphosphine); TEP (triethylphosphite); TPP (triphenylphosphine), TPPO (triphenylphosphine oxide), methylthioether (1-(2-ethylbutyl)-N-[2-(methylthio)phenyl]-cyclohexanecarboxamide), ethylthioether (1-(2-ethylbutyl)-N-[2-(ethylthio)phenyl]-cyclohexanecarboxamide),
- 5 isopropylthioether (1-(2-ethylbutyl)-N-[2-(isopropylthio)phenyl]-cyclohexanecarboxamide).

Example 1: Use of triphenylphosphine in toluene at reflux



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- In a double jacket vessel under argon 13.4 g DTDA (54 mmol, 0.54 eq) was suspended in 65 g toluene (75 ml). 11.6 g NMM (115 mmol, 1.15 eq) was added. The dark brown suspension was heated to 100°C and the suspension became a clear solution. 24.5 g acid chloride (100 mmol, 1.0 eq, Assay: 94.2 (% mass)) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes
- 15 at 100°C. The reaction mixture was heated at reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 7h under reflux.

The reaction mixture was cooled to RT and extracted with 20 g water twice. The toluene phase was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 59 g toluene (68 ml).

- 20 14.2 g of TPP (54 mmol, 0.54 eq) was dissolved in 36 g toluene (42 ml) followed by the addition of the above amidodisulfide solution in toluene at 25°C. 9.82 g isobutyric anhydride (62 mmol, 0.621 eq) was added and rinsed with 9 g toluene (10 ml). The reaction mixture was heated to reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 6h under reflux. An IPC-sample showed 38.6% TPPO, 0% amidothiophenol, 0% amidodisulfide and 61.0% thioester.

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The reaction mixture was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 109 g heptane (160 ml). The solution was warmed to 40°C and extracted four times with each a mixture of 89 g MeOH (112 ml) and 48 g water (48 ml). The phases were allowed to separate for 10 minutes after each extraction. The aqueous phases were discarded.

The thioester heptane solution was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the oily residue was added 117 g EtOH (148 ml) and the suspension was heated at 50°C until the solution was clear. A lab filter unit with external heating (50°C) was charged with an activated charcoal filter pad.

10 The reddish-brown thioester solution in ethanol was filtered at 50°C through the above filter unit within approx. 20 minutes and became light brown. The flask and the filter unit were washed with 16 g EtOH (20 ml). The solution was filtered through a polishing filter (Millipore®) at 50°C into an Erlenmeyer flask. The flask and the filter unit were rinsed with 16 g EtOH (20 ml). Obtained were ca. 170 g EtOH-solution (assay thioester 19.8%, 87.8%
15 yield)

The filtered thioester EtOH solution was transferred into the double jacket vessel at 50°C. The flask was rinsed with 16 g EtOH (20 ml).

The clear solution was cooled to RT and seeded with a suspension of thioester (0.3 mmol, 0.003 eq) seeding crystals in 2.0 g EtOH/water 1:1 (m/m) (2.3 ml). The seeded solution was
20 stirred until a well mixed suspension was obtained (60 minutes), and then, while stirring, water was added with the use of a Dosimat® (Metrohm® automatic dispenser) within 60 minutes at RT. After complete addition the crystallization mixture was stirred for 30 minutes and then cooled to -10°C (T_i) within 3.5h and further stirred for min. 60 minutes at this temperature. The suspension was isolated by filtration on paper and the isolated crystals were
25 washed with a mixture of 36 g EtOH (45 ml) and 15 g water (cooled to -10°C). The wet crystals (approx. 45 g) were dried at 45°C under reduced pressure for 16h until the weight was constant. 32.9 g thioester (83.9 mmol, yield 83.9%) were obtained.

Example 2: Use of tributylphosphine in toluene at reflux

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In a double jacket vessel under argon 13.4 g DTDA (54 mmol, 0.54 eq) was suspended in 65 g toluene (75 ml). 11.6 g NMM (115 mmol, 1.15 eq) was added. The dark brown suspension was heated to 100°C and the suspension became a clear solution. 23.9 g acid chloride (100 mmol, 1.0 eq, Assay: 96.7 (% mass)) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes
5 at 100°C. The reaction mixture was heated to reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 6h under reflux.

The reaction mixture was cooled to RT and washed with 20 g water twice. The toluene phase was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 59 g toluene (68 ml).

10 The above toluene solution was transferred into another vessel and rinsed with 17 g toluene (20 ml). To this toluene solution was added at room temperature via dropping funnel 9.81 g isobutyric anhydride (62 mmol, 0.62 eq). The dropping funnel was rinsed with 9 g (10 ml) toluene. Subsequently 11.5 g TBP(54 mmol, 0.54 eq.) was added via dropping funnel within 25 minutes at RT. The dropping funnel was rinsed with 10 g (12 ml) toluene. After 3 hours
15 additional 0.08 g isobutyric anhydride (0.5 mmol, 0.005 eq) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred for another 90 minutes. An IPC-sample showed 0.52% amidothiophenol, 0% amidodisulfide and 90.8% thioester.

The reaction mixture was completely evaporated at 40-85°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 109 g heptane (160 ml). The heptane solution was washed at room
20 temperature four times with each a mixture of 89 g MeOH (112 ml) and 48 g water (48 ml). The phases were allowed to separate for 10 minutes after each extraction. The aqueous phases were discarded.

The thioester heptane solution was completely evaporated at 45-60°C under reduced pressure. To the oily residue was added 117 g EtOH (148 ml) and the suspension was heated at 50°C
25 until the solution was clear. A lab filter unit with external heating (50°C) was charged with an activated charcoal filter pad and a 0.45 µm membrane (Millipore®) filter.

The reddish-brown thioester EtOH solution was filtered at 50°C through above filter unit within approx. 20 minutes and became light brown. The flask and the filter unit were washed

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with 32 g EtOH (40 ml). Obtained were 180 g EtOH-solution (containing 18.8% thioester, 86.9% yield)

The filtered thioester EtOH solution was transferred into the double jacket vessel at 50°C. The flask was rinsed with 16 g EtOH (20 ml).

- 5 The clear solution was cooled to RT and seeded with a suspension of thioester (0.3 mmol, 0.003 eq.) seeding crystals in 2.0 g EtOH/water 1:1 (m/m) (2.3 ml). The seeded solution was stirred until a well mixed suspension was obtained (60 minutes), and then, while stirring, 72 g water was added with the use of a Dosimat® (Metrohm automatic dispenser) within 60 minutes at RT. After complete addition the crystallization mixture was stirred for 30 minutes
- 10 and then cooled to -10°C (T_i) with a ramp of 10°C/h and further stirred for 60 minutes at this temperature. The suspension was isolated by filtration on paper and the isolated crystals were washed with a mixture of 36 g EtOH (45 ml) and 15 g water (cooled to -10°C). The wet crystals (40.7 g) were dried at 45 °C under reduced pressure for 16h until the weight was constant. 33.0 g thioester (assay 99.1%, 83.8 mmol, yield 83.8%) were obtained.

15 **Example 3: Use of triethylphosphite (TEP) in toluene at reflux,**

- In a double jacket vessel under argon 13.4 g DTDA (54 mmol, 0.54 eq) was suspended in 65 g toluene (75 ml). 11.6 g NMM (115 mmol, 1.15 eq) was added. The dark brown suspension was heated to 100°C and the suspension became a clear solution. 23.9 g acid chloride (100 mmol, 1.0 eq, Assay: 96.7 (% mass)) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes
- 20 at 100°C. The reaction mixture was heated to reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 6h under reflux.

The reaction mixture was cooled to RT and washed twice with 20 g water twice. The toluene phase was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 59 g toluene (68 ml).

- 25 The above toluene solution was transferred into another vessel and rinsed with 17 g toluene (20 ml). To the toluene solution was added at room temperature via dropping funnel 9.81 g isobutyric anhydride (62 mmol, 0.62 eq). The dropping funnel was rinsed with 17 g (20 ml) toluene. Subsequently 9.16 g TEP (54 mmol, 0.54 eq.) was added via dropping funnel within

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25 minutes at RT. The dropping funnel was rinsed with 10 g (12 ml) toluene. The reaction mixture was heated to 60°C and stirred for 20 minutes at this temperature. An IPC-sample showed 0% amidothiophenol, 0% amidodisulfide, 87.9% thioester and 5.0% ethylthioether.

The reaction mixture was completely evaporated at 40-85°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 109 g heptane (160 ml). The heptane solution was washed at room temperature four times with each a mixture of 89 g MeOH (112 ml) and 48 g water (48 ml). The phases were allowed to separate for 10 minutes after each extraction. The aqueous phases were discarded.

The thioester heptane solution was completely evaporated at 45-60°C under reduced pressure. To the oily residue was added 117 g EtOH (148 ml) and the suspension was heated at 50°C until the solution was clear. A lab filter unit with external heating (50°C) was charged with an activated charcoal filter pad and a 0.45 µm membrane (Millipore®)filter.

The reddish-brown thioester EtOH solution was filtered at 50°C through above filter unit within approx. 20 minutes and became light brown. The flask and the filter unit were washed with 32 g EtOH (40 ml).

The filtered thioester EtOH solution was transferred into the double jacket vessel at 50°C. The flask was rinsed with 16 g EtOH (20 ml).

The clear solution was cooled to RT and seeded with a suspension of thioester (0.3 mmol, 0.003 eq.) seeding crystals in 2.0 g EtOH/water 1:1 (m/m) (2.3 ml). The seeded solution was stirred until a well mixed suspension was obtained (60 minutes), and then, while stirring, 72 g water was added with the use of a Dosimat® (Metrohm automatic dispenser) within 60 minutes at RT. After complete addition the crystallization mixture was stirred for 30 minutes and then cooled to -10°C (T_i) with a ramp of 10°C/h and further stirred for 60 minutes at this temperature. The suspension was isolated by filtration on paper and the isolated crystals were washed with a mixture of 36 g EtOH (45 ml) and 15 g water (cooled to -10°C). The wet crystals (38.6 g) were dried at 45°C under reduced pressure for 16h until the weight was constant. 33.2 g thioester (assay 99.5%, 84.4 mmol, yield 84.4%) were obtained. 0.48% of ethylthioether was observed.

Example 4: Use of TEP in toluene under reflux

In a double jacket vessel under argon 13.4 g DTDA (54 mmol, 0.54 eq) was suspended in 65 g toluene (75 ml). 11.6 g NMM (115 mmol, 1.15 eq) was added. The dark brown suspension was heated to 100°C and the suspension became a clear solution. 23.9 g acid chloride (100
5 mmol, 1.0 eq, Assay: 96.7 (% mass)) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes at 100°C. The reaction mixture was heated at reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 6h under reflux.

The reaction mixture was cooled to RT and washed twice with each 20 g water. The toluene phase was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added
10 59 g toluene (68 ml).

The above toluene solution was transferred into another vessel and rinsed with 17 g toluene (20 ml). To the toluene solution was added at room temperature via dropping funnel 9.81 g isobutyric anhydride (62 mmol, 0.62 eq). The dropping funnel was rinsed with 17 g (20 ml) toluene. Subsequently 9.16 g TEP (54 mmol, 0.54 eq.) were added via dropping funnel within
15 20 minutes at 24-30°C. The dropping funnel was rinsed with 10 g (12 ml) toluene. The reaction mixture was heated to 30°C and stirred for 30 minutes at that temperature. An IPC-sample showed 0% amidothiophenol, 0% amidodisulfide, 87.6% thioester and 5.2% ethylthioether

The toluene solution was washed at room temperature 5 times with each 100 g water (100
20 ml). The phases were always allowed to separate for 5 minutes. The aqueous phases were discarded.

The thioester toluene solution was completely evaporated at 45-60°C under reduced pressure. To the oily residue was added 117 g EtOH (148 ml) and the suspension was heated at 50°C until the solution was clear. A lab filter unit with external heating (50°C) was charged with
25 an activated charcoal filter pad and a 0.45 µm membrane (millipore®)filter.

The reddish-brown thioester EtOH solution was filtered at 50°C through above filter unit within approx. 20 minutes and became light brown. The flask and the filter unit were washed with 32 g EtOH (40 ml).

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The filtered thioester EtOH solution was transferred into the double jacket vessel at 50°C. The flask was rinsed with 16 g EtOH (20 ml).

The clear solution was cooled to RT and seeded with a suspension of thioester (0.3 mmol, 0.003 eq.) seeding crystals in 2.0 g EtOH/water 1:1 (m/m) (2.3 ml). The seeded solution was stirred until a well mixed suspension was obtained (60 minutes), and then while stirring 72 g water was added with the use of a Dosimat® (Metrohm® automatic dispenser) within 60 minutes at RT. After complete addition the crystallization mixture was stirred for 30 minutes and then cooled to -10°C (T_i) with a ramp of 10°C/h and further stirred for 60 minutes at this temperature. The suspension was isolated by filtration on paper and the isolated crystals were washed twice with each a mixture of 36 g EtOH (45 ml) and 15 g water (cooled to -10°C). The wet crystals (43.9 g) were dried at 45°C under reduced pressure for 16h until the weight was constant. 33.1 g thioester (assay 99.5%, 84.5 mmol, yield 84.5%) were obtained. 0.41% of ethylthioether was observed.

Example 5: With triethylphosphite (reaction at -20°C), no triethylphosphate extraction

In a double jacket vessel under argon 13.4 g DTDA (54 mmol, 0.54 eq) was suspended in 65 g toluene (75 ml). 11.6 g NMM (115 mmol, 1.15 eq) was added. The dark brown suspension was heated to 100°C and the suspension became a clear solution. 24.1 g acid chloride (100 mmol, 1.0 eq, Assay: 95.8 (% mass)) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes at 100°C. The reaction mixture was heated at reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 6h under reflux.

The reaction mixture was cooled to RT and washed twice with each 20 g water. The toluene phase was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 59 g toluene (68 ml).

The above toluene solution was transferred into another vessel and rinsed with 17 g toluene (20 ml). To the toluene solution was added at room temperature via dropping funnel 9.82 g isobutyric anhydride (62 mmol, 0.62 eq). The dropping funnel is rinsed with 28 g (32 ml) toluene. Subsequently the reaction mixture was cooled to -20°C T_i and 9.16 g TEP (54 mmol, 0.54 eq.) were added via syringe pump within 60 minutes at -20°C T_i. The reaction mixture

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was stirred for 60 minutes. An IPC-sample showed 2.1% amidothiophenol, 0% amidodisulfide, 93.4% thioester and 2.1% ethylthioether.

The reaction mixture was completely evaporated at 45-60°C under reduced pressure. To the oily residue was added 117 g ethanol (148 ml) and the suspension was heated at 50°C until
5 the solution was clear. A lab filter unit with external heating (50°C) was charged with an activated charcoal filter pad and a 0.45 µm membrane (millipore®) filter.

The reddish-brown thioester ethanol solution was filtered at 50°C through above filter unit within approx. 20 minutes and became light brown. The flask and the filter unit were washed with 32 g ethanol (40 ml).

10 The filtered thioester ethanol solution was transferred into the double jacket vessel at 50°C. The flask was rinsed with 16 g ethanol (20 ml).

The clear solution was cooled to 20°C and seeded with a suspension of thioester (0.3 mmol, 0.003 eq.) seeding crystals in 2.0 g ethanol/water 1:1 (m/m) (2.3 ml). The seeded solution was stirred until a well mixed suspension was obtained (60 minutes), and then, while stirring
15 72 g water was added with the use of a Dosimat® (Metrohm® automatic dispenser) within 60 minutes at 20-24°C. After complete addition the crystallization mixture was stirred for 30 minutes and then cooled to -10°C (T_i) with a ramp of 10°C/h and further stirred overnight at this temperature. The suspension was isolated by filtration on paper and the isolated crystals were washed twice with each a mixture of 36 g ethanol (45 ml) and 15 g water (cooled to -
20 10°C). The wet crystals (43.7 g) were dried at 45°C under reduced pressure for 6h until the weight was constant. 34.1 g thioester (assay 98.7%, 86.4 mmol, yield 86.3%) were obtained. 0.32% of ethylthioether was observed.

**Example 6: Use of triisopropylphosphite (TIP) at 0°C, no triisopropylphosphate
25 extraction**

In a double jacket vessel under argon 13.4 g DTDA (54 mmol, 0.54 eq) was suspended in 65 g toluene (75 ml). 11.6 g N-methyl morpholine (115 mmol, 1.15 eq) was added. The dark brown suspension was heated to 100°C and the suspension became a clear solution. 24.1 g

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acid chloride (100 mmol, 1.0 eq, Assay: 95.9 (% mass)) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes at 100°C. The reaction mixture was heated at reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 6h under reflux.

The reaction mixture was cooled to 25°C and washed twice with each 20 g water. The
5 toluene phase was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 59 g toluene (68 ml).

The above toluene solution was transferred into another vessel and rinsed with 17 g toluene (20 ml). To the toluene solution was added at room temperature via dropping funnel 9.82 g isobutyric anhydride (62 mmol, 0.62 eq). The dropping funnel was rinsed with 28 g (32 ml)
10 toluene. Subsequently the reaction mixture was cooled to -2 to 0°C T_i and 11.84 g triisopropylphosphit (54 mmol, 0.54 eq.) were added via syringe pump within 60 minutes at 0°C T_i. The reaction mixture was stirred for 30 minutes. . An IPC-sample showed <0.1% amidothiophenol, 0.17% amidodisulfide, 95.7% thioester and 1.6% isopropylthioether.

The reaction mixture was completely evaporated at 45-60°C under reduced pressure. To the
15 oily residue was added 117 g ethanol (148 ml) and the suspension was heated at 50°C until the solution was clear. A lab filter unit with external heating (50°C) was charged with an activated charcoal filter pad and a 0.45 µm membrane (millipore®) filter.

The reddish-brown thioester ethanol solution was filtered at 50°C through above filter unit within approx. 20 minutes and became light brown. The flask and the filter unit were washed
20 with 32 g ethanol (40 ml).

The filtered thioester ethanol solution was transferred into the double jacket vessel at 50°C. The flask was rinsed with 16 g ethanol (20 ml).

The clear solution was cooled to 20°C and seeded with a suspension of thioester (0.3 mmol, 0.003 eq.) seeding crystals in 2.0 g ethanol/water 1:1 (m/m) (2.3 ml). The seeded solution
25 was stirred until a well mixed suspension was obtained (60 minutes), and then, while stirring 72 g water was added with the use of a Dosimat® (Metrohm® automatic dispenser) within 60 minutes at 20-24°C. After complete addition the crystallization mixture was stirred for 30 minutes and then cooled to -10°C (T_i) with a ramp of 10°C/h and further stirred overnight at

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this temperature. The suspension was isolated by filtration on paper and the isolated crystals were washed twice with each a mixture of 36 g ethanol (45 ml) and 15 g water (cooled to -10°C). The wet crystals (55.1 g) were dried at 45°C under reduced pressure over the weekend. 34.7 g thioester (assay 99.5%, 88.6 mmol, yield 88.6%) were obtained. 0.10% of isopropylthioether was observed.

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Example 7: Pretreatment of quenched amidodisulfide reaction mixture with isobutyric anhydride at 80°C before reduction with TIP

In a double jacket vessel under argon 4.0 g DTDA (16.2 mmol, 0.54 eq) was suspended in 19.5 g toluene (22.5 ml). 3.49 g N-methyl morpholine (34.5 mmol, 1.15 eq) was added. The dark brown suspension was heated to 100°C and the suspension became a clear solution. 7.15 g acid chloride (30 mmol, 1.0 eq, Assay: 96.8 (% mass)) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes at 100°C. The reaction mixture was heated at reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 6h under reflux.

The reaction mixture was cooled to 25°C and washed twice with each 6 g water. The toluene phase was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 17.7 g toluene (20.4 ml).

The above toluene solution was transferred into another vessel and rinsed with 11.8 g toluene (13.6 ml). To the toluene solution was added at room temperature 3.08 g isobutyric anhydride (19.5 mmol, 0.65 eq). The reaction mixture was stirred for 60 minutes at 20°C, 60 minutes at 50°C and 3 hours 30 minutes at 80°C. Subsequently the reaction mixture was cooled to 10°C T_i and 3.2 g triisopropylphosphite (14.6 mmol, 0.49 eq.) were added via syringe pump within 60 minutes at 10°C T_i. The reaction mixture was stirred for 90 minutes, after which additional 377 mg triisopropylphosphite were added. After further 3 hours of stirring, an IPC-sample showed 0% amidothiophenol, 0% amidodisulfide, 90.4% thioester and 0.36% isopropylthioether.

Example 8: Use of TPP in dichloromethane at room temperature In a double jacket vessel under argon 31.0 g DTDA (125 mmol, 0.54 eq) is suspended in 146 g toluene. 26.9 g NMM

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(266 mmol, 1.15 eq) was added. The dark brown suspension was heated to 100°C and the suspension became a clear solution. 54.9 g acid chloride (232 mmol, 1.0 eq, Assay: 97.3 (% mass)) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes at 100°C. The reaction mixture was heated at reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 7h under reflux.

- 5 The reaction mixture was cooled to RT and extracted twice with each 45 g water. The toluene phase was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 180 g methylene chloride).

- 32.8 g of TPP (125 mmol, 0.54 eq) was dissolved in 111 g dichloromethane followed by the addition of the above amidodisulfide solution in dichloromethane at 25°C. 22.8 g isobutyric
10 anhydride (144 mmol, 0.621 eq) were added and rinsed with 29 g dichloromethane. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 36h (results after 2 hours: 4.3% amidothiophenol, <0.1% amidodisulfide; results after 36 hours: 1.7% amidothiophenol, <0.1% amidodisulfide).

- The reaction mixture was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the
15 residue was added 224 g heptane. The solution was warmed to 40°C and extracted 4 times with a mixture of 199 g MeOH and 110 g water. The phases were always allowed to separate for 10 minutes. The aqueous phases were discarded.

- The thioester heptane solution was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the oily residue was added 262 g EtOH and the suspension was heated at 50°C until the
20 solution was clear. A lab filter unit with external heating (50°C) was charged with an activated charcoal filter pad.

- The reddish-brown thioester EtOH solution was filtered at 50°C through above filter unit within approx. 20 minutes and became light brown. The flask and the filter unit were washed with 34 g EtOH. The solution was filtered over a polishing (millipore®)filter at 50°C into an
25 Erlenmeyer flask.

The filtered thioester EtOH solution was transferred into the double jacket vessel at 50°C. The flask was rinsed with 34 g EtOH .

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The clear solution was cooled to RT and seeded with a suspension of 262 mg thioester seeding crystals in 4.4 g EtOH/water 1:1 (m/m). The seeded solution was stirred until a well mixed suspension was obtained (60 minutes), and then, while stirring 160 g water was added with the use of a Dosimat® (metrohm® automatic dispenser) within 60 minutes at RT. After
5 complete addition the crystallization mixture was stirred for 30 minutes and then cooled to -10°C (T_i) within 3.5h and further stirred for min. 60 minutes at this temperature. The suspension was isolated by filtration on paper and the isolated crystals are washed with a mixture of 80 g EtOH and 34 g water (cooled to -10°C). The wet crystals (approx. 98 g) are dried at 40°C under reduced pressure for 16h until the weight was constant. 78.8 g thioester
10 (assay 97.1%, yield 83.7%, 0.4% amidothiophenol) are obtained.

Example 9: Use of TPP in toluene at room temperature In a double jacket vessel under argon 31.0 g DTDA (125 mmol, 0.54 eq) was suspended in 146 g toluene. 26.9 g NMM (266 mmol, 1.15 eq) was added. The dark brown suspension was heated to 100°C and the
15 suspension became a clear solution. 54.9 g acid chloride (232 mmol, 1.0 eq, Assay: 97.3 (% mass)) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes at 100°C. The reaction mixture was heated at reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 7h under reflux.

The reaction mixture was cooled to RT and extracted twice with each 45 g water. The toluene phase was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was
20 added 132 g toluene).

32.8 g of TPP (125 mmol, 0.54 eq) was dissolved in 80 g toluene followed by the addition of the above amidodisulfide solution in toluene at 25°C. 22.8 g isobutyric anhydride (144 mmol, 0.621 eq) are added and rinsed with 20 g toluene. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 24h (results after 3 hours: 10.6% amidothiophenol, <0.1% amidodisulfide;
25 results after 24 hours: 4.9% amidothiophenol, <0.1% amidodisulfide).

The reaction mixture was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 224 g heptane. The solution was warmed to 40°C and extracted 4 times with a mixture of 199 g MeOH and 110 g water. The phases are always allowed to separate for 10 minutes. The aqueous phases are discarded.

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The thioester heptane solution was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the oily residue was added 262 g EtOH and the suspension was heated at 50°C until the solution was clear. A lab filter unit with external heating (50°C) was charged with an activated charcoal filter pad.

- 5 The reddish-brown thioester EtOH solution was filtered at 50°C through above filter unit within approx. 20 minutes and became light brown. The flask and the filter unit are washed with 34 g EtOH. The solution was filtered over a polishing (millipore®) filter at 50°C into an Erlenmeyer flask.

The filtered thioester EtOH solution was transferred into the double jacket vessel at 50°C.

- 10 The flask was rinsed with 34 g EtOH .

- The clear solution was cooled to RT and seeded with a suspension of 262 mg thioester seeding crystals in 4.4 g EtOH/water 1:1 (m/m). The seeded solution was stirred until a well mixed suspension was obtained (60 minutes), and then, while stirring 160 g water was added with the use of a Dosimat® (metrohm automatic dispenser) within 60 minutes at RT. After
15 complete addition the crystallization mixture was stirred for 30 minutes and then cooled to -10°C (T_i) within 3.5h and further stirred for min. 60 minutes at this temperature. The suspension was isolated by filtration on paper and the isolated crystals are washed with a mixture of 80 g EtOH and 34 g water (cooled to -10°C). The wet crystals (approx. 119 g) are dried at 40°C under reduced pressure for 16h until the weight was constant. 81 g thioester
20 (assay 98.4%, yield 88.2%, 1.0% amidothiophenol) are obtained.

Example 10: Use of excess TPP in toluene followed by H₂O₂ oxidation

- In a double jacket vessel under argon 13.5 g DTDA (54 mmol, 0.54 eq) was suspended in 65 g toluene (75 ml). 11.6 g N-methylmorpholine (115 mmol, 1.15 eq) was added. The dark brown suspension was heated to 100°C and the suspension becomes a clear solution. 23.7 g
25 acid chloride (100 mmol, 1.0 eq, assay: 97.3% (% mass)) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes at 100°C. The reaction mixture was heated to reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 5h under reflux.

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The reaction mixture was cooled to 25°C and extracted twice with each 20 g water. The toluene phase was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 59 g toluene (68 ml).

14.7 g Triphenylphosphine (56 mmol, 0.56 eq) was dissolved in 36 g toluene (42 ml) and the above amidodisulfide solution in toluene was added at 25°C. 9.82 g isobutyric anhydride (62 mmol, 0.621 eq) was added and rinsed with 9 g toluene (10 ml). The reaction mixture was heated to reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 5h under reflux. An IPC-sample showed 36.7% TPPO, 0.16% amidothiophenol, 0% amidodisulfide and 60.2% thioester.

The reaction mixture was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the residue was added 109 g heptane (160 ml). The suspension was warmed to 25-30°C and a mixture of 89 g methanol (112 ml) and 48 g water (48 ml) was added. 3.4 g H₂O₂ (10% solution in water) (10 mmol, 0.10 eq.) was added and the biphasic mixture was stirred for 30 minutes. The aqueous phase was removed and the organic phase was extracted three times with each a mixture of 89 g methanol (112 ml) and 48 g water (48 ml). The phases were allowed to separate for 10 minutes after each extraction. The aqueous phases were discarded.

The thioester solution was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the oily residue was added 117 g ethanol (148 ml) and the suspension was heated at 50°C until the solution was clear. A lab filter unit with external heating (50°C) was charged with an activated charcoal filter pad.

The reddish-brown thioester solution was filtered at 50°C through above filter unit within approx. 20 minutes and became light brown. The flask and the filter unit were washed with 16 g ethanol (20 ml). The solution was filtered through a polishing filter at 50°C into an Erlenmeyer flask. The flask and the filter unit was rinsed with 16 g ethanol (20 ml).

The filtered thioester ethanol solution was transferred into the double jacket vessel at 50°C. The flask was rinsed with 16 g ethanol (20 ml).

The clear solution was cooled to 20°C and seeded with a suspension of thioester (0.3 mmol, 0.003 eq) seeding crystals in 2.0 g ethanol/water 1:1 (m/m) (2.3 ml). The seeded solution was stirred until a well mixed suspension was obtained (60 minutes), then, while stirring, water

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was added with the use of a Dosimat® within 60 minutes at 24°C. After complete addition the crystallization mixture was stirred for 30 minutes and then cooled to -10°C (T_i) within 3.5h and further stirred for 60 minutes at this temperature. The suspension was isolated by filtration on paper and the isolated crystals were washed with a mixture of 36 g ethanol (45 ml) and 15 g water (cooled to -10°C). The wet crystals (approx. 45 g) were dried at 45°C under reduced pressure for 16h until the weight was constant. 34.0 g thioester (assay 99.7%, 87 mmol, yield 87.0%) were obtained.

Example 11: Use of excess TPP in heptane followed by H₂O₂ oxidation

In a double jacket vessel under argon 13.4 g 2,2'-dithio dianiline (54 mmol, 0.54 eq) was suspended in 51 g heptane (75 ml). 11.6 g N-methyl morpholine (115 mmol, 1.15 eq) was added. The dark brown suspension was heated to 100°C and the suspension became a clear solution. 23.7 g CAT-acid chloride (CAT13) (100 mmol, 1.0 eq, Assay: 97.3 (% mass)) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes at 100°C. The reaction mixture was heated to 113°C under pressure (max 2 bar) and then stirred for 7h at this temperature.

The reaction mixture was cooled to 25°C and extracted twice with each 20 g water. The heptane phase was heated to reflux at normal pressure and azeotroped using a Dean-Stark-trap until the heptane phase was dry. The heptane phase was cooled to room temperature.

14.7 g triphenyl phosphine (56 mmol, 0.56 eq) and 24 g heptane (35 ml) were charged to the above solution in heptane at 25°C. 9.82 g isobutyric anhydride (62 mmol, 0.621 eq) were added and rinsed with 7 g heptane (10 ml). The reaction mixture was heated at reflux (100°C) and then stirred for 5h under reflux. An IPC-sample showed 10.8% TPPO, 0% amidothiophenol, 0% amidodisulfide and 84.3% thioester.

The reaction mixture was cooled to 35°C and diluted with 27 g heptane (40 ml) and a mixture of 89 g methanol (112 ml) and 37 g water. 11.3 g of 3% H₂O₂-solution (10 mmol, 0.10 eq.) were added and the biphasic mixture was stirred for 30 minutes at 35°C. The aqueous phase is separated and the organic phase was extracted 4 times with each a mixture of 89 g methanol (112 ml) and 48 g water (48 ml). The phases were always allowed to separate for 10 minutes. The aqueous phases were discarded.

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The thioester heptane solution was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the oily residue was added 117 g ethanol (148 ml) and the suspension is heated at 50°C until the solution was clear. A lab filter unit with external heating (50°C) was charged with an activated charcoal filter pad.

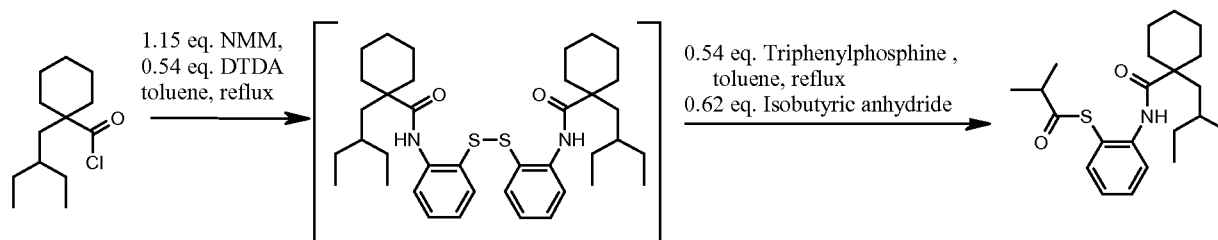
- 5 The reddish-brown thioester ethanol solution was filtered at 50°C through above filter unit within approx. 20 minutes and becomes light brown. The flask and the filter unit were washed with 16 g ethanol (20 ml). The solution was filtered over a polish filter at 50°C into an Erlenmeyer flask. The flask and the filter unit was rinsed with 16 g ethanol (20 ml).

The filtered thioester ethanol solution was transferred into the double jacket vessel at 50°C.

- 10 The flask was rinsed with 16 g ethanol (20 ml).

- The clear solution was cooled to 18-20°C and seeded with a suspension of thioester (0.3 mmol, 0.003 eq) seeding crystals in 2.0 g ethanol/water 1:1 (m/m) (2.3 ml). The suspension was stirred until a well mixed suspension is obtained (60 minutes), subsequently and while stirring water was added with the use of a Dosimat® within 60 minutes at 24°C. After
 15 complete addition the crystallization mixture was stirred for 30 minutes and then cooled to -10°C (T_i) within 3.5h and further stirred for min. 60 minutes at this temperature. The suspension was isolated by filtration on paper and the isolated crystals were washed with a mixture of 36 g ethanol (45 ml) and 15 g water (cooled to -10°C). The wet crystals (42.5 g) were dried at 45°C under reduced pressure for 16h until the weight was constant. 34.6 g of
 20 thioester (88.9 mmol, yield 88.9%) were obtained.

Example 12: Extraction of TPPO with a multi stage centrifugal extractor (model used LX526 from Rousselet & Robatel)



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In a double jacket vessel 114 kg DTDA (459 mol, 0.54 eq) and 99 kg NMM (979 mol, 1.15 eq) was suspended in 555 kg toluene (640 l). The suspension was heated to 100°C and the suspension became a clear solution. 197 kg acid chloride (854 mol, 1.0 eq, assay corrected) was added to this solution over a period of 30 minutes at 100°C. The reaction mixture was
5 heated at reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 6 hours under reflux.

The reaction mixture was transferred to another double jacket vessel and rinsed with 43 kg toluene (49 l). The reaction mixture was cooled to RT and extracted with 171 kg water twice. 100 kg solvent was evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. At constant volume 500 kg toluene (434 l) was added to the residue while evaporating solvent.

10 121 kg of TPP (461 mol, 0.54 eq) was dissolved in 282 kg toluene (325 l) followed by the addition of the above amidodisulfide solution in toluene at 25°C. 84 kg isobutyric anhydride (531 mol, 0.62 eq) was added. The reaction mixture was heated to reflux (115°C) and then stirred for 6 hours under reflux.

The reaction mixture was completely evaporated at 50°C under reduced pressure. To the
15 residue was added 930 kg heptane (1348 l). The solution was warmed to 40°C and extracted with a mixture of 181 kg MeOH (229 l) and 98 kg water (98 l). The aqueous phase was discarded.

The heptane solution (feed 1200 l/h) was extracted at 40°C with methanol/water (65/35) (feed 800 l/h) via a 6 stage centrifugal extractor at 1800 rpm. The vessel was rinsed with 104
20 kg heptane (150 l) and the heptane was extracted against methanol/water (65/35) in the extractor under the same conditions.

The thioester heptane solution was completely evaporated at 55°C under reduced pressure. To the oily residue was added 1258 kg EtOH (1593 l) and the suspension was heated at 50°C until the solution was clear. A 16'' filter unit with external heating (50°C) was charged with
25 three activated charcoal filter modules.

The reddish-brown thioester solution in ethanol was filtered at 50°C through the above filter unit and an additional polishing filter (5 µm) within approx. 2 hours and became yellowish. The vessel and the filters were rinsed with 156 kg EtOH (198 l).

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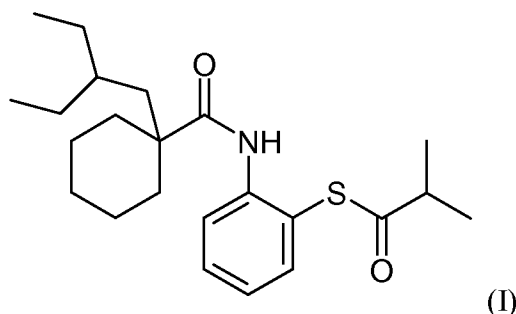
The clear solution was cooled to RT and seeded with a suspension of 1 kg thioester (2.6 mol, 0.003 eq) seeding crystals in 17 kg EtOH/water 1:1 (m/m). The seeded solution was stirred until a well mixed suspension was obtained (60 minutes), and then, while stirring, 615 kg water (615 l) was added within 60 minutes at RT. After complete addition the crystallization
5 mixture was stirred for 30 minutes and then cooled to -10°C (T_i) within 3.5 hours and further stirred for min. 60 minutes at this temperature.

The suspension was separated on a centrifuge and the isolated crystals were washed with a mixture of 307 kg EtOH (390 l) and 128 kg water (cooled to -10°C).

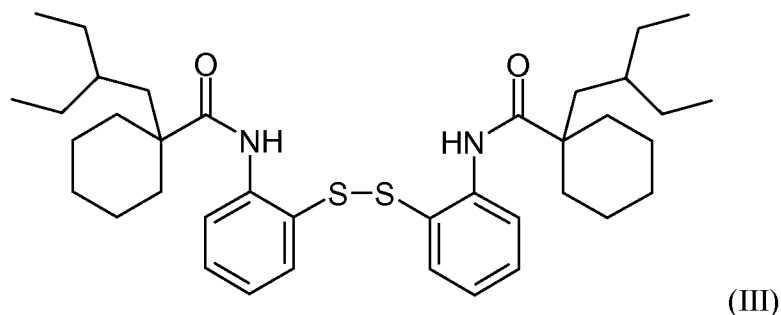
The wet crystals (approx. 378 kg) were dried in a spherical dryer at 45°C under reduced
10 pressure for 11 hours. 298.8 kg thioester (assay 99.5 %, 763 mol, yield 89.3 %) were obtained.

Claims

1. A process for the preparation of the compound of formula (I):



which comprises reacting a compound of formula (III)



with isobutyric anhydride and a reducing agent.

2. The process according to claim 1, wherein the acylation is carried out with at least 0.10M of a reducing agent.
3. The process according to either claim 1 or 2, wherein the said reducing agent is a phosphine, phosphinite, phosphonite or phosphite.
4. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 3, which further comprises the oxidation of the excess of the reducing agent with an oxidizing agent.
5. The process according to claim 4, wherein the oxidizing agent is Oxone® or hydrogen peroxide, most preferably the oxidizing agent is hydrogen peroxide.
6. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the said reducing agent is a phosphine.
7. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the said reducing agent is triphenyl phosphine.

8. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 6 which further comprises the extraction of phosphine oxide, phosphinate, phosphonate or phosphate from compound of formula (I) in the presence of an organic solvent with water/alcohol mixtures.

9. The process according to either claim 6 or 7, which further comprises the extraction of phosphine oxide, more preferably triphenyl phosphine oxide from compound of formula (I) in the presence of an organic solvent with water/alcohol mixtures.

10. The process according to any of claims 1 to 9 which further comprises crystallizing compound of formula (I) from a water miscible solvent as solvent and water as antisolvent.

11. The process according to 10 wherein the water miscible solvent is acetone, ethanol, isopropanol, propanol or mixtures thereof, most preferably ethanol.

12. The process according to any of claims 1 to 9 which further comprises a crystallization from a non polar solvent, preferably hexane, cyclohexane, heptane, pentane, most preferably from heptane.

13. The process according to any one of claims 1 to 9, which further comprises the following steps:

- a) forming a solution of compound of formula (I) in acetone, ethanol, isopropanol or propanol at a temperature of 40°C to 70°C;
- b) cooling the solution until supersaturation, preferably to room temperature;
- c) adding seed crystals of compound of formula (I);
- d) optionally aging the suspension, preferably for at least 10 min, most preferably for 60 minutes;
- e) adding water while stirring until the desired solvent/water ratio is obtained, more preferably ethanol:water is 7:3 (m/m);
- f) optionally further stirring the crystallization mixture;

g) cooling the crystallization mixture to a temperature below 0°C, more preferably between 0°C and -20°C, most preferably to -10°C, to effect the crystallization and precipitation of compound of formula (I) from the solution thereof,

h) separating the crystalline compound of formula (I) from the liquid component of the mixture, preferably the crystalline compound of formula (I) is filtered out.

14. A process for preparing the crystalline S-[2-[1-(2-ethylbutyl)cyclohexylcarbonylamino]-phenyl] 2-methylthiopropionate, compound of formula (I) which comprises:

- a) forming a solution of compound of formula (I) in acetone, ethanol, isopropanol or propanol at a temperature of 40°C to 70°C;
- b) cooling the solution until supersaturation, preferably to room temperature;
- c) adding seed crystals of compound of formula (I);
- d) optionally aging the suspension, preferably for at least 10 min, most preferably for 60 minutes;
- e) adding water while stirring until the desired solvent/water ratio is obtained, more preferably ethanol:water is 7:3 (m/m);
- f) optionally further stirring the crystallization mixture;
- g) cooling the crystallization mixture to a temperature below 0°C, more preferably between 0°C and -20°C, most preferably to -10°C, to effect the crystallization and precipitation of compound of formula (I) from the solution thereof,
- h) separating the crystalline compound of formula (I) from the liquid component of the mixture, preferably the crystalline compound of formula (I) is filtered out.

15. S-[2-[1-(2-ethylbutyl)cyclohexylcarbonylamino]-phenyl] 2-methylthiopropionate crystalline form prepared by a process comprising the steps of:

- a) forming a solution of compound of formula (I) in acetone, ethanol, isopropanol or propanol at a temperature of 40°C to 70°C;

- b) cooling the solution until supersaturation, preferably to room temperature;
- c) adding seed crystals of compound of formula (I);
- d) optionally aging the suspension, preferably for at least 10 min, most preferably for 60 minutes;
- e) adding water while stirring until the desired solvent/water ratio is obtained, more preferably ethanol:water is 7:3 (m/m);
- f) optionally further stirring the crystallization mixture;
- g) cooling the crystallization mixture to a temperature below 0°C, more preferably between 0°C and -20°C, most preferably to -10°C, to effect the crystallization and precipitation of compound of formula (I) from the solution thereof,
- h) separating the crystalline compound of formula (I) from the liquid component of the mixture, preferably the crystalline compound of formula (I) is filtered out.

16. The invention as hereinbefore described.