

CONVERSION OF ALCOHOLS TO LINEAR AND BRANCHED FUNCTIONALIZED ALKANES

TECHNICAL FIELD

- 5 Embodiments herein relate to eco-friendly and mild methods for the conversion of simple alcohols into functionalized long-chain alkanes.

BACKGROUND

10 Up-to-date the concern of the environment and the climate change is arguable one of our times biggest and a severe issue; hence finding new sustainable technological solutions to the replacement or reducing of fossil-based materials is a great challenge.¹ The urge and the spark in this field have promoted the scientific community to face this problem. In this context, biofuels made from renewable resources is a good alternative from the environmental point of view, having less negative impact compared to fossil based fuels. The conversion of biomass to bio-
15 fuel is an intensively studied and highly attractive goal, while demanding to accomplish.² Alcohols such as methanol, ethanol, butanol and isopropanol are versatile organic compounds and desirable starting materials, which are easily accessible from biomass (e.g. through fermentation, pyrolysis, etc.) and can be further manipulated for the employment as biofuels.

20 Research in the conversion of alcohols to long-chain alkanes is starting to grow. Anbarasan *et al.* demonstrated the catalytic conversion of extractive fermentation to potential fuel chemicals by the integration of chemical catalysis.⁴ Moreover, the group of Gröger presented a mild step-wise approach for the synthesis of Guerbet alcohols.^{5,6,7} It is known that aldehydes can be condensed/oligomerized using organic catalysts. However, the one-pot conversion of alcohols to oligomeric aldehydes is not known. There are examples in the use of heterogeneous catalysis
25 for the hydrogenation or oxidation reactions of enals and allylic alcohols, respectively.^{8,9} However, integrating this type of catalysis to application of short chain alcohols, aldehydes and ketones is challenging due to the elevated temperatures, needed for these applications, which are often above the boiling point of these short chain compounds. Moreover, compatibility issues may occur for less bulky substrates. Thus, the conversion of simple alcohols to valuable
30 functional alkanes (e.g. biofuels, Guerbet alcohols, synthons) under mild conditions using integrated catalysis is of great importance.

OBJECT OF THE DISCLOSURE

35 It is an objective of the disclosure to synthesize long-chain linear or branched functionalized alkanes as important synthetic building blocks (synthons) or biofuel components from simple starting alcohols.

Another objective of the disclosure is to present a one-pot solution of the synthesis as described above.

Another objective of the disclosure is to synthesize long-chain linear or branched functionalized alkanes from alcohols derived from biomass or other renewable sources.

- 5 A still further objective of the disclosure is to provide methods of the aforementioned kind that is advantageous from an environmental and health standpoint.

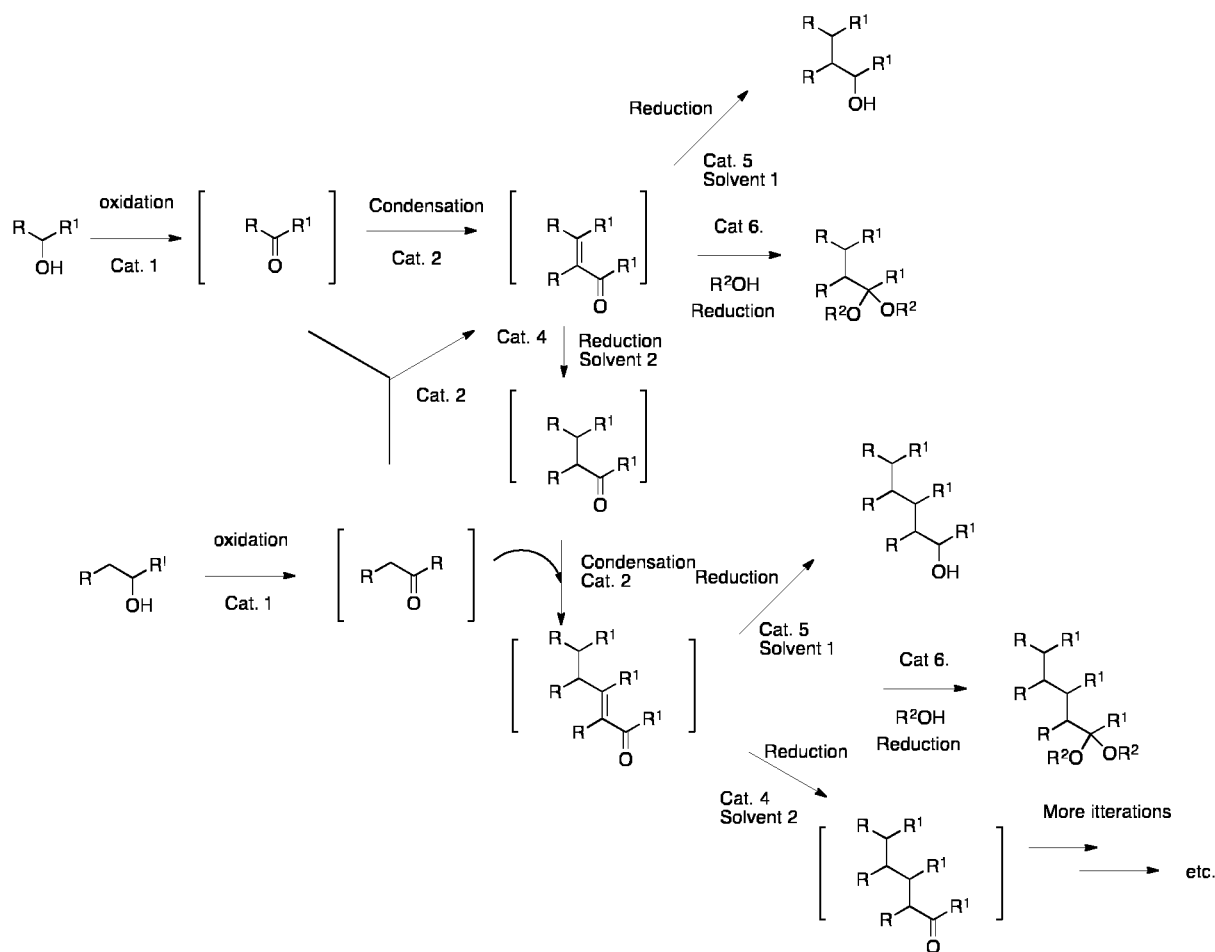
Even more objectives will become evident from a study of the summary of the disclosure, a number of presented embodiments illustrated in the detailed description and enclosed schemes, and the appended claims.

10

SUMMARY

- Embodiments herein are directed towards methods of producing biofuel components or valuable synthons from biomass derived alcohols or other simple alcohols. The strategy is based on the use of a multicatalytic approach by employing and combining enzyme-, organo- and heterogeneous catalysis for the conversion of simple alcohols as starting materials into products such as long-chain alcohols, long-chain saturated aldehydes or ketones, or long-chain acetals or ketals, in a sequential or one-pot procedure, according to Scheme 1.
- 15

- In embodiments, methods herein may convert a starting alcohol (a simple alcohol), by:
- 20 (i) Oxidizing the starting alcohol to a corresponding aldehyde or ketone;
- (ii) Condensating the corresponding aldehyde or ketone to an enal or enone; and
- (iii) Reducing the enal or enone to a product, said product being an alcohol, an aldehyde, a ketone, an acetal or a ketal having a longer chain than the chain of the starting alcohol.



Scheme 1 – Iterative integrated catalysis strategy for the conversion of simple alcohols to higher value functional alkanes.

By simple alcohols, it is understood herein, easily available, mono-, or dialcohols, having a linear or branched, saturated or unsaturated carbon chain of between 1 and 30 carbon atoms (C1-30). By long-chain functionalized alkanes (or products) it is understood herein a compound having a carbon chain longer than the carbon chain of the starting material from which the said product was generated.

Suitable alcohols that may be used for the oxidation step of methods herein are RCH_2OH or $\text{RCH}(\text{OH})\text{R}^1$, wherein R is H, alkyl, aryl, alkenyl, or heterocyclic group and R^1 is alkyl.

In another embodiment, as shown even in scheme 1, the method of embodiments herein may be applied iteratively, wherein the steps of methods described above may be repeated on a product alcohol, which used as a starting alcohol is converted to a product with even longer chain.

In methods herein, a suitable oxidant may be chosen, depending on the nature of the starting alcohol. The oxidant may be oxygen, air, hydrogen peroxide, or sodium hypochlorite. A person skilled in the art may determine the nature of the oxidant for the specific starting alcohol.

An oxidizing catalyst may be employed in the oxidizing step. Suitable catalysts, depending on

the nature of the starting alcohol, may be a heterogeneous supported metal catalyst, a homogeneous organometallic complex, a metal-free catalyst, or an enzyme. A person skilled in the art may determine the nature of the catalyst for the specific starting alcohol.

5 A suitable metal-free condensation catalyst or a salt thereof may be used for the condensation of the corresponding aldehyde or ketone into the enal or enone.

In the reduction step of methods herein, a suitable reduction agent (such as formic acid, H₂, ammonium formate, or Hantzsch ester) may be optionally combined with a suitable heterogeneous or homogenous metal catalyst, a metal-free catalyst, or an enzyme, converting the enal or enone into the product.

10 When the method is performed in one-pot fashion, multi-catalytic cascade relay sequences are involved, combining enzymatic, organo- and heterogeneous catalysis of the three steps as described above. The advantages of one-pot synthesis are well known, as they require considerably less time and energy to perform, and generate often less by-products.

15 Alcohols that can be converted into the corresponding aldehydes or ketones by using methods herein may be for example methanol, ethanol, propanol, butanol, benzyl alcohol, isopropanol, hexanol, octanol, nonanol, hexadecanol and octadecanol. Aldehydes that can be converted to enals or enones by using methods herein may be for example acetaldehyde, formaldehyde, propanal, butanal, pentanal, hexanal, octanal, 2,4-Hexadienal, cinnamic aldehyde, or benzyl aldehyde.

20 The starting alcohol, may have been obtained from renewable resources, such as biomass, triglycerides, wood, algae, syngas, or may be generated through fermentation or pyrolysis. The starting alcohol may be a fatty alcohol. Relying on renewable sources for providing the starting material, decreases the impact of the method on the environment.

In alternative embodiments, methods herein may comprise:

- 25 (i) providing the starting alcohol,
(ii) providing an oxidant, such as air, O₂, or NaClO,
(iii) optionally providing an oxidation catalysts system such as TEMPO, CuBr, bpy, NMI, O₂; or TEMPO, HNO₃, HCl, O₂; or TEMPO, NaOCl, KBr; or a heterogeneous supported metal catalyst (Pd, Ag, Ru, Ir, Fe); or a homogeneous catalyst system (Pd, Ag, Ru, Ir, Fe) and converting the starting alcohol in the presence of said oxidation catalyst system into the corresponding aldehyde or ketone,
30 (iv) providing an amine catalyst system or a salt thereof,
(v) optionally including an acid, and converting the corresponding aldehyde or ketone, in the presence of said amine catalyst system or the salt thereof, optionally including an acid, into the enal or enone,
35 (vi) providing a reducing agent, such as formic acid, H₂, or ammonium formate,
(vii) optionally providing a reducing catalyst, such as a heterogeneous supported metal catalyst (Pd, Ag, Ru, Ir, Fe, Ni, or Co), or a homogeneous organometallic complex (Pd, Ag, Ru,

Ir, Fe, Ni, or Co); and reducing the enal or enone, optionally in the presence of said reducing catalyst, into the product.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

5 Embodiments herein relate to environmentally and very mild processes for the conversion of simple alcohols to advanced biofuel compounds or synthons (Scheme 1). The synthetic strategy starts with the selective oxidation of the alcohols either chemically or enzymatically to the corresponding aldehydes or ketones, respectively. Furthermore, in the next step the aldehydes or ketones are condensed to long-chain unsaturated compounds (enals or enones) by the aid of
10 a suitable catalyst (e.g. an organocatalyst or a salt thereof). The enal or enone is then selectively hydrogenated in the presence of a heterogeneous metal catalyst and a suitable reducing agent (such as hydrogen gas, ammonium formate, formic acid) or through enzymatic reduction, providing saturated aldehyde, keto- or alcohol functionalized alkanes. Notable, the steps can be integrated in one-pot or in sequential procedure, taking the chemical process towards a more
15 sustainable, time, economic and energy efficient approach.³ The sequences can also be repeated in an iterative fashion so that the carbon chains of the product can be further extended (Scheme 1).

In Example 1 and Table 1 below, the results from the study of the oxidation step are summarized. Among the oxidizing systems tested with oxygen as oxidizer, the combination TEMPO
20 ((2,2,6,6-Tetramethylpiperidin-1-yl)oxyl), NaOCl and NaBr gives highest yield and shorter reaction time, at a temperature as mild as of 10 °C. This illustrates the importance and efficiency of choosing a suitable catalyst system for the oxidation of a given starting alcohol.

The conversion of the aldehyde into corresponding enal by condensation or oligomerization can be achieved with a suitable organocatalyst or a salt thereof, for instance pyrrolidine, proline, ammonium fluoride, ammonium formate or glycine. In some cases, acid may be used as
25 additive, as for example acetic acid. (See Example 2 and Table 2) For reaching the desired selectivity (with the enal **2** as major or only condensation product), the choice of catalyst is essential.

The conversion of the unsaturated long-chain linear or branched compound (enal or enone) to
30 the corresponding saturated long-chain linear or branched product by hydrogenation/reduction was studied in Example 3, and summarized in Table 3. A heterogeneous Pd-catalyst in the presence of H₂-gas, and a hydrogenating enzyme or an organocatalyst proved to be suitable reduction system for the studied reaction.

The learnings from the isolated reactions discussed above, were applied to a one-pot conversion method according to embodiments herein, comprising the condensation and the reduction
35 steps. (See example 4, and Table 4). The compatibility of the two reactions performed in a one-pot fashion and implicitly the compatibility and stability of the two catalyst systems was proven by the high conversion and selectivity observed with a variety of different starting alcohols. Moreover, the stability of the Pd-catalyst as reduction catalyst is proven by a 5-recycle

study (See Example 5 and Table 5), which opens for an ecologic approach where the metal catalyst may be recycled.

The one-pot reaction system was tested as well for the iterative approach, where the product generated through the conversion of a starting alcohol or aldehyde according to embodiments herein, was used as starting material in methods described herein. (as described in Scheme 3, Example 6),

More one-pot examples of conversion of different alcohols into the corresponding aldehydes, followed by condensation to enals and subsequent reduction to the saturated, branched products are illustrated in Examples 7 and 8, proving the wide scope of methods herein.

Starting from simple alcohols and combining in one-pot metal or metal-free oxidation, or alternatively enzymatic oxidation step, with organocatalytic condensation step and finally with heterogeneous metal catalyzed, organocatalytic or enzymatic hydrogenation step gives, in a selective manner and with excellent yields, the product (being an alcohol, an aldehyde or a ketone, an enal or enone) with a longer chain than the chain of the starting alcohol.

Embodiments herein may utilize a renewable source as a source of ethanol and other simple alcohols, the said source being biomass, triglycerides, wood, algae, or syngas (preferably generated in a gasification process). Moreover, embodiments herein may be performed in one-pot without any purification of intermediates. The use of renewable sources of starting materials, an organocatalyst, an enzyme and a recyclable heterogeneous metal catalyst, in a one-pot synthesis, renders embodiments herein sustainable and environmentally benign.

The process may be started from readily available, simple aldehydes or ketones, without the need of a first oxidation step.

EXAMPLES

General methods

¹H NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Avance (500 MHz or 400 MHz) spectrometer. Chemical shifts are reported in ppm from tetramethylsilane with the solvent resonance resulting from incomplete deuterium incorporation as the internal standard (CDCl₃: □ 7.26 ppm). Data are reported as follows: chemical shift, multiplicity (s = singlet, d = doublet, q = quartet, br = broad, m = multiplet), and coupling constants (Hz), integration. ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Avance (125.8 MHz or 100 MHz) spectrometer with complete proton decoupling; Chemical shifts are reported in ppm from tetramethylsilane with the solvent resonance as the internal standard (CDCl₃: □ 77.16 ppm).

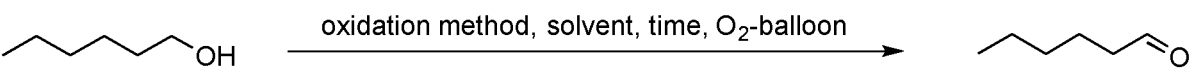
Commercial reagents were used as purchased without any further purification. Aluminum sheet silica gel plates (Fluka 60 F254) were used for thin-layer chromatography (TLC), and the compounds were visualized by irradiation with UV light (254 nm), or by treatment with a solution of phosphomolybdic acid (25 g), Ce(SO₄)₂·H₂O (10 g), conc. H₂SO₄ (60 mL), and

H₂O (940 mL), followed by heating or by dipping in KMnO₄-Stain followed by heating or washing away the stain with water. Purification of the product was carried out by flash column chromatography using silica gel (Fluka 60, particle size 0.040-0.063 mm)

Example 1- Optimization studies of the oxidation step (table 1)

To a microwave-vial containing hexanol (102 mg, 1 mmol, 1 equiv.) was added the oxidation system and solvent shown in table 1 and afterwards the reaction mixture was stirred at the temperature and for the time stated in table 1.

Table 1. Optimization studies of the oxidation

						
Entry	Tempo (%)	Additives	Solvent	Temp. (°C)	Time (h)	Conv. (%) ^a
1	1	NaOCl (1.6 M), NaBr (10 mol%) NaHCO ₃ (0.53 M)	CH ₂ Cl ₂ /H ₂ O	5	18	8
2 ^b	10	NaOCl (1.6 M), KBr (10 mol%) NaOH (2 M)	CH ₂ Cl ₂ /H ₂ O	5	21	20
3	5	HNO ₃ (10 mol%) HCl (10 mol%)	CH ₃ CN/H ₂ O	45	24	20
4	5	CuBr (5 mol%), bpy (5 mol%) NMI (10 mol%)	CH ₃ CN	24	24	73
5 ^c	5	CuBr (5 mol%), bpy (5 mol%) NMI (10 mol%)	CH ₃ CN	24	45	83
6	-	MCF-AmP-Pd(0) (1.5 mol%)	<i>p</i> -Xylene	110	24	14
7 ^b	1	NaOCl (1.6 M) NaBr (10 mol%)	CH ₂ Cl ₂ /H ₂ O	10	10/60	>99
8 ^b	1	NaOCl (1.6 M), NaBr (10 mol%)	Toluene/H ₂ O	10	6	91
9 ^b	1	NaOCl (1.6 M), NaBr (10 mol%)	Toluene/H ₂ O	10	1	>99
10 ^{b,d}	1	NaOCl (1.6 M), NaBr (10 mol%)	CH ₂ Cl ₂ /H ₂ O	10	3	82
11 ^{c,d}	1	NaOCl (1.6 M), NaBr (10 mol%)	CH ₂ Cl ₂ /H ₂ O	10	10/60	>99

[a] Determined by ¹H NMR spectroscopy on the crude reaction mixture using mesitylene as internal standard. [b] Sat. NaHCO₃ was used to adjust the pH to 9 of NaOCl. [c] The reaction was performed with octanol. [d] The reaction was performed with ethanol.

Example 2- Optimization studies of the condensation step (table 2)

To a microwave-vial containing acetaldehyde (88.1 mg, 2 mmol, 1 equiv.) was added the oligomerization catalyst and solvent shown in table 2 and afterwards the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for the time stated in table 2.

5

Table 2. Optimization of the organocatalytic condensation/oligomerization

1		2	3		4
Entry	Catalyst (mol%)	Solvent	Time (h)	Conv. ^a	Ratio ^a 2:3:4
1 ^b	Pyrrolidine/HOAc (0.3)	-	168	20	47:11:41
2 ^c	Proline (1.0)	Toluene	14	29	80:7:13
3 ^c	Pyrrolidine/HOAc (5.0)	Toluene	3	95	80:20:0
4 ^b	Pyrrolidine/HOAc (5.0)	-	72	93	26:46:28
5 ^d	NH ₄ F (30.0)	water	168	12	100:0:0
6 ^d	HCO ₂ NH ₄ (30.0)	water	168	12	100:0:0
7 ^d	Glycine (20.0)	water	168	12	100:0:0
8 ^e	Pyrrolidine/HOAc (5.0)	Toluene	1.5	96	59:41:0
9 ^c	Pyrrolidine/HOAc (5.0)	Toluene/water	30	92	87:8:5
10 ^c	Pyrrolidine/HOAc (5.0)	water	30	20	62:0:38
11 ^c	Pyrrolidine/HOAc (5.0)	brine	30	13	74:0:26
12 ^c	Pyrrolidine/HOAc (5.0)	CH ₂ Cl ₂ /water	3	>99	74:26:0

[a] Determined by ¹H NMR spectroscopy on the crude reaction mixture using mesitylene as internal standard. [b] The reaction was performed in the presence of water (100 μL). [c] The concentration of acetaldehyde is 4 M. [d] The concentration of acetaldehyde is 1 M. The temperature was increase to 37 °C after 48 h. [e] The concentration of acetaldehyde is 2 M and the reaction was performed at 60 °C.

10

Example 3- The Pd-catalyst hydrogenation step (table 3)

In a microwave vial containing trans, trans - 2, 4 hexadienal (9.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) in solvent (1 mL) was added MCF-AmP-Pd(0) (6.5 mg, 5 mol%) or CPG (25 mg, 5 mol%) or Pd/C (5.3 mg, 5 mol%, 10 Wt.%) and a balloon filled with H₂ -gas was connected to the vial and stirred for 3 h in room temperature.

Table 3. Studies of the heterogeneous Pd-catalyst hydrogenation

$ \begin{array}{c} \text{Pd-catalyst (5 mol\%)} \\ \text{H}_2\text{-gas (balloon)} \\ \hline \text{toluene, r.t., 3 h} \end{array} \rightarrow $			
Entry	Pd-catalyst	Solvent	Conv. (%) ^a
1	MCF-AmP-Pd(0)	Toluene	>99
2	CPG-Pd(0)	Toluene	>99
3	Pd/C	Toluene	>99
4	Pd/C	Water	>99
5	MCF-AmP-Pd(0)	Water	>99
6	MCF-AmP-Pd(0)	Acetonitrile	>99
7	MCF-AmP-Pd(0)	MeOH ^b	>99

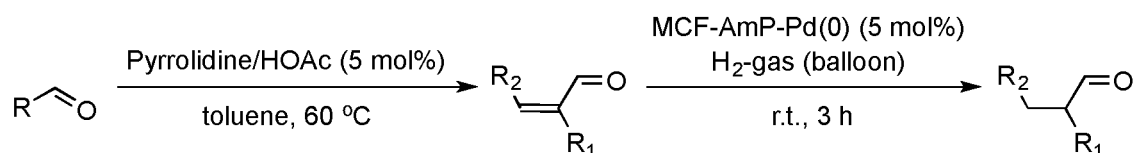
[a] Determined by ¹H NMR spectroscopy on the crude reaction mixture using mesitylene as internal standard.

[b] The methanol in situ generated acetal of hexanal (1,1-dimethoxy-hexane) was formed as the product.

Example 4- Substrate scope for the one-pot condensation and hydrogenation (table 4)

In a dried microwave vial containing the aldehyde (2 mmol, 1 equiv.) in toluene (1 mL), was added pyrrolidine (7.1 mg, 0.1 mmol, 5 mol %) and acetic acid (6.0 mg, 0.1 mmol, 5 mol%). Then the mixture was stirred in 60 °C for the time stated in table 4. Then MCF-AmP-Pd(0) (130 mg, 5 mol%) was added followed by connection of a balloon filled with H₂-gas and the reaction stirred at room temperature for 3 h.

Table 4. Substrate scope for the one-pot condensation and hydrogenation



Entry	R	R ₁	R ₂	Time (h)	Conv. (%) ^a
1	CH ₃	H	CH ₃	1.5	96
2 ^b	C ₃ H ₇	C ₂ H ₅	C ₃ H ₇	72	93
3	C ₃ H ₇	C ₂ H ₅	C ₃ H ₇	4h	>99
4	C ₅ H ₁₁	C ₄ H ₉	C ₅ H ₁₁	4h	97
5	BnCH ₂	Bn	BnCH ₂	4h	>99

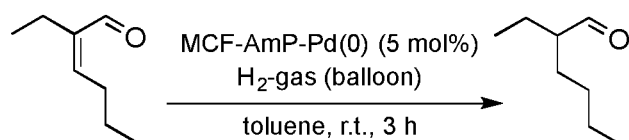
[a] Determined by ¹H NMR spectroscopy on the crude reaction mixture using mesitylene as internal standard. The conversion is given for the oligomerization step. In the hydrogenation step >99% conversion was obtained in all examples. [b] The reaction was performed at 25 °C.

5

Example 5- recycling studies of the MCF-AmP-Pd(0)-catalyst for the hydrogenation reaction (table 5)

In a microwave vial containing 2-ethyl hexenal (9.6 mg, 0.1 mmol) in toluene (1 mL) was added MCF-AmP-Pd(0) (6.5 mg, 5 mol%) and a balloon filled with H₂-gas was connected to the vial and stirred for 3 h at room temperature. Afterwards the reaction mixture was centrifuged and the solid heterogeneous catalyst was further washed with dichloromethane three times by centrifugation and the dried under overnight under vacuum. Then the dried and recycled MCF-AmP-Pd(0) was further used in the next cycle.

Table 5. Recycling studies of the MCF-AmP-Pd(0)-catalyzed hydrogenation



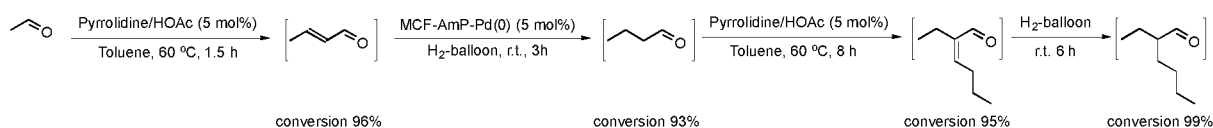
Cycle	Conv. (%) ^a
1	>99
2	>99
3	>99
4	>99
5	>99

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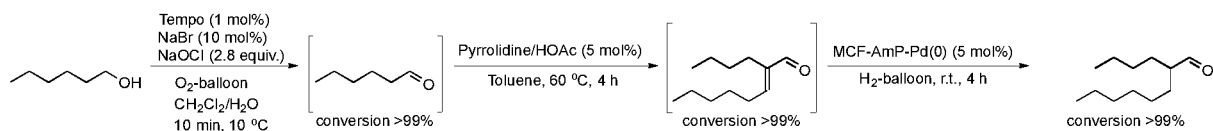
[a] Determined by ¹H NMR spectroscopy on the crude reaction mixture using mesitylene as internal standard.

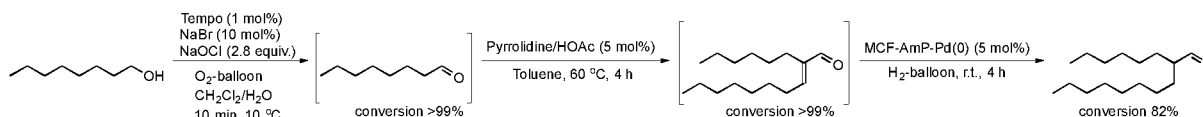
Example 6- One-pot reaction from acetaldehyde to 2-ethyl-hexanal (Scheme 3)

In a dried microwave vial containing acetaldehyde (88.1 mg, 2 mmol) in toluene (1 mL), was added pyrrolidine (7.1 mg, 0.1 mmol, 5 mol %) and acetic acid (6.0 mg, 0.1 mmol, 5 mol%). Then the mixture was stirred in 60 °C for 1.5 h. Then MCF-AmP-Pd(0) (134 mg, 5 mol%) or Pd/C (106 mg, 5 mol%) was added followed by connection of a balloon filled with H₂-gas and the reaction stirred at room temperature for 3 h. Then H₂ gas was removed and pyrrolidine (7.1 mg, 0.1 mmol, 5 mol%) and acetic acid (6.0 mg, 0.1 mmol, 5 mol%) were added and the reaction mixture was stirred at 60 °C for 8 h. Subsequently, the balloon filled with H₂-gas was connected and the reaction kept stirring at room temperature for 6 h.

**Scheme 3 – One-pot reaction from acetaldehyde to 2-ethyl-hexanal****Example 7- One-pot multicycatalytic strategy for the synthesis of saturated branched compound starting from hexanol (Scheme 4 and 5)**

To a microwave-vial containing hexanol (120 mg, 1 mmol, 1 equiv.) or octanol (130 mg, 1 mmol, 1 equiv.) and Tempo (1.6 mg, 0.01 mmol, 1 mol%) was added CH₂Cl₂ (2.5 mL) and the reaction mixture was sonicated for 3 minutes. Afterwards the reaction was cooled to 10 °C and stirred vigorously. Subsequently, cooled NaBr (0.1 M, 0.1 mL, 10 mol%) and NaOCl (1.6 M, 2.8 equiv. pH adjusted to 9 by sat. NaHCO₃) were added. Afterwards a balloon filled with O₂-gas was connected and the reaction stirred at 10 °C for 10 min. Then the organic phase was extracted by using CH₂Cl₂ (3x5 mL) and dried over Na₂SO₄. Afterwards the solvent was evaporated and the dry reaction mixture was transferred to a microwave-vial by toluene (0.5 mL) and then pyrrolidine (3.4 mg, 0.1 mmol, 5 mol%) and acetic acid (6.0 mg, 0.1 mmol, 5 mol%) were added and the reaction mixture was stirred at 60 °C for 4h. Then the reaction was cooled to room temperature and subsequently, MCF-AmP-Pd(0) (67 mg, 5 mol%) was added followed by connection of a balloon filled with H₂-gas and the reaction stirred at room temperature for 4 h.

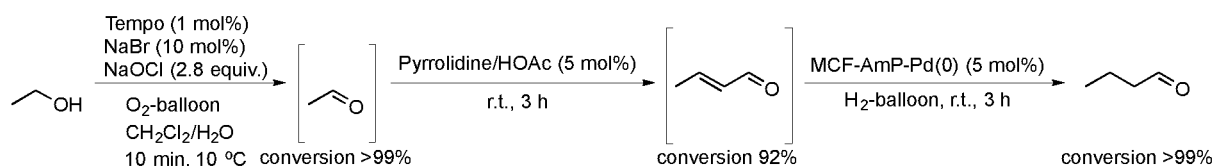
**Scheme 4 – One-pot multicycatalytic reaction for the synthesis of saturated branched compound starting from hexanol**



Scheme 5 – One-pot multicatalytic reaction for the synthesis of saturated branched compound starting from octanol

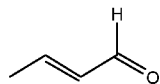
5 Example 8- One-pot multicatalytic strategy for the synthesis of butyraldehyde starting from ethanol (Scheme 6)

To a microwave-vial containing ethanol (46mg, 1 mmol, 1 equiv.) and Tempo (1.6 mg, 0.01 mmol, 1 mol%) was added CH_2Cl_2 (2.5 mL) and the reaction mixture was sonicated for 3 minutes. Afterwards the reaction was cooled to 10 °C and stirred vigorously. Subsequently, cooled NaBr (0.1 M, 0.1 mL, 10 mol%) and NaOCl (1.6 M, 2.8 equiv. pH adjusted to 9 by sat. NaHCO_3) were added. Afterwards a balloon filled with O_2 -gas was connected and the reaction stirred at 10 °C for 3 h. Afterwards pyrrolidine (3.4 mg, 0.05 mmol, 5 mol%) and acetic acid (3.0 mg, 0.05 mmol, 5 mol%) were added and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 3 h. Then the reaction was cooled to room temperature and subsequently, MCF-AmP-Pd(0) (67 mg, 5 mol%) was added followed by connection of a balloon filled with H_2 -gas and the reaction stirred at room temperature for 3 h.

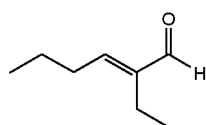


Scheme 6 – One-pot multicatalytic reaction for the synthesis of butyraldehyde compound starting from ethanol

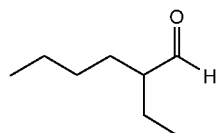
Structures of the analyzed intermediates and products:



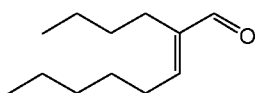
- 5 **But-2-enal:** ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3): δ 9.4 (d, $J = 7.9$ Hz, 1H), 6.8 (m, 1H), 6.09 (m, 1H), 1.98 (d, $J = 6.9$ Hz, 3H).



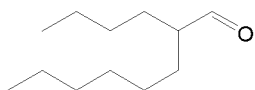
- 10 **2-ethylhex-2-enal:** ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3): δ 9.39 (s, 1H), 6.43 (t, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 1H), 2.4 (m, 4H), 1.57 (m, 2H), 1.01 (t, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 6H).



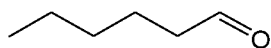
2-ethylhexanal: ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3): δ 9.6 (d, $J = 3$ Hz, 1H), 2.2 (m, 1H), 1.67 (m, 2H), 1.51 (m, 2H), 1.33 (m, 4H), 0.95 (t, $J = 7.3$ Hz, 6H).



- 15 **2-butyloct-2-enal:** ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3): δ 9.39 (s, 1H), 6.44 (t, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 1H), 2.28 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 2H), 1.53 (m, 2H), 1.37 (m, 10H), 0.95 (m, 6H).

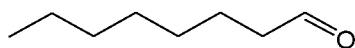


- 20 **2-butyloctanal:** ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3): δ 9.59 (d, $J = 3.1$ Hz, 1H), 2.26 (m, 1H), 1.66 (m, 2H), 1.48 (m, 2H), 1.33 (m, 12H), 0.95 (m, 6H).

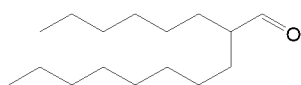


Hexanal: ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3): δ 9.80 (b s, 1H), 2.48 (t, $J = 7.4$ Hz, 2H), 1.73 (m, 2H), 1.43 (m, 4H), 1.02 (t, $J = 6.9$ Hz, 3H).

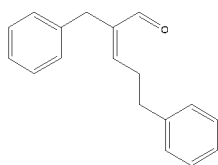
5



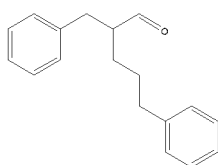
Octanal: ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3): δ 9.77 (b s, 1H), 2.42 (t, $J = 7.2$ Hz, 2H), 1.64 (m, 2H), 1.32 (m, 8H), 0.91 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 3H).



10 **2-hexyldecanal:** ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3): δ 9.55 (d, $J = 3.0$ Hz, 1H), 2.33 (m, 1H), 1.63 (m, 2H), 1.43 (m, 2H), 1.28 (m, 20H), 0.95 (m, 6H).



15 **2-benzyl-5-phenylpent-2-enal:** ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3): δ 9.48 (s, 1H), 7.34 (t, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 2H), 7.22 (m, 4H), 7.18 (m, 4H), 6.65 (t, $J = 7.1$ Hz, 1H), 3.64 (s, 2H) 2.79 (m, 4H).



20 **2-benzyl-5-phenylpentanal:** ^1H NMR (500 MHz, CDCl_3): δ 9.68 (d, $J = 2.4$ Hz, 1H), 7.3 (m, 2H), 7.24 (m, 4H), 7.1 (d, $J = 7.6$ Hz, 4H), 3.04 (m, 1H), 2.74 (m, 1H), 2.65 (m, 3H), 1.7 (m, 3H), 1.57 (m, 1H).

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Embodiments herein may be defined by the following clauses:

1. A method for the conversion of alcohols comprising either (ia) providing an aldehyde;
and (iia) bringing said aldehyde to a longer-chain enal; and (iiaa) bring said enal to an
aldehyde.
or (ib) providing an aldehyde; and (iib) bringing said aldehyde to a longer-chain enal;
and (iibb) bring said enal to an alcohol.
or (ic) providing a ketone; and (iic) bringing said ketone to a longer-chain enone; and
(iiic) bring said enone to a ketone.
or (id) providing a ketone; and (iid) bringing said ketone to a longer-chain enone; and
(iiid) bring said enone to an alcohol.
or (ie) providing an aldehyde; and (iie) bringing said aldehyde to a longer-chain
enone; and (iiie) bring said enone to a ketone.
or (if) providing an aldehyde; and (iif) bringing said aldehyde to a longer-chain enone;
and (iiif) bring said enone to an alcohol.
or (ig) providing an aldehyde; and (iig) bringing said aldehyde to a longer-chain enal;
and (iiig) bring said enal to an acetal.
or (ih) providing a ketone; and (iih) bringing said ketone to a longer-chain enone; and
(iiic) bring said enone to an acetal.
2. The method according to clause 1 wherein said alcohol-groups are primary alcohols,
said aldehydes moiety have an R group (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes),
said longer-chain enals have R groups (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes),
said aldehydes have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) groups.
3. The method according to clause 1 wherein said alcohol-groups are primary alcohols,
said aldehydes moiety have an R group (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes),
said longer-chain enals have R groups (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes),
said alcohols have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) groups.
4. The method according to clauses 1-3 where said primary alcohol and aldehyde groups
were generated via the sequence described in claim 1-3.
5. The method according to clause 1 wherein said alcohol-groups are secondary alcohols,
said keto-group have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) and R¹ (R¹ = me-
thyl, ethyl, alkyl) groups, said longer-chain enones have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, hetero-
cyclic and alkenes) and R¹ (R¹ = methyl, ethyl, alkyl) groups, said ketones have R (R =
H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) and R¹ (R¹ = methyl, ethyl, alkyl) groups.
6. The method according to clause 1 wherein said alcohol-groups are secondary alcohols,
said keto-group have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) and R¹ (R¹ = me-

thyl, ethyl, alkyl) groups, said longer-chain enones have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) and R¹ (R¹ = methyl, ethyl, alkyl) groups, said alcohols have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) and R¹ (R¹ = methyl, ethyl, alkyl) groups.

- 5 7. The method according to clauses 1, 5-6 where said secondary alcohol and keto groups were generated via the sequence described in claims 1, 5 and 6.
- 10 8. The method according to clause 1 wherein said alcohol-groups are primary alcohols, said aldehydes moiety have an R group (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes), said longer-chain enals have R groups (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes), said acetals have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) groups and R² (R² = methyl, ethyl, alkyl) groups.
- 15 9. The method according to clause 1 wherein said alcohol-groups are secondary alcohols, said keto-group have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) and R¹ (R¹ = methyl, ethyl, alkyl) groups, said longer-chain enones have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) and R¹ (R¹ = methyl, ethyl, alkyl) groups, said acetals have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes), R¹ (R¹ = methyl, ethyl, alkyl) groups and R² (R² = methyl, ethyl, alkyl) group
- 20 10. The method according to clauses 1-9 in which the aldehydes, ketones and alcohols is provided by first (i) providing alcohols; (ii) providing an oxidant (air, H₂O₂, O₂, NaOCl); (iii) optionally providing a catalyst which is heterogeneous supported metal catalyst, or a homogeneous organometallic complex, or a metal-free catalyst (mediator); and (iv) oxidizing enzyme (EC 1:10:3:2) oxidizing the alcohol, optionally in the presence of said catalyst.
- 25 then
- 30 (v) providing aldehydes; or ketones (vi) providing a metal-free catalyst system (vii) optionally including an acid; or salt (viii) converting the aldehyde; or ketone, in the presence of said catalyst system or salt (ix) providing enals; or enones (x) providing a reducing agent (formic acid, H₂, ammonium formate, Hantzsch ester); (xi) optionally providing a catalyst which is heterogeneous supported metal catalyst, or a homogeneous organometallic complex, or a metal-free catalyst; and (xii) reducing enzyme; reducing the enals; or enones, optionally in the presence of said catalyst. (xiii) providing aldehydes; or ketones; or alcohols; or acetals.
- 35 11. The method according to clause 10 in which the condensation catalyst is an organocatalytic system or salt.
- 40 12. The method according to clause 10 wherein said alcohol-groups are primary alcohols, said aldehyde moiety has an R group (R = H, alkyl, aryl and heterocyclic).

13. The method according to clause 10 wherein said alcohol-groups are secondary alcohols, said keto-group have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) and R¹ (R¹ = methyl, ethyl and alkyl) groups.
- 5 14. The method according to clause 10 wherein said aldehydes are linear or branched aldehydes, said aldehyde moiety has an R group (R = H, alkyl, aryl and heterocyclic).
15. The method according to clause 10 wherein said enals are linear or branched aldehydes, said enal has an R group (R = H, alkyl, aryl and heterocyclic).
- 10 16. The method according to clause 10 wherein said ketones are linear or branched ketones, said ketone have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) and R¹ (R¹ = methyl, ethyl and alkyl) groups).
- 15 17. The method according to clause 10 wherein said enones are linear or branched enones, said enone have R (R = H, alkyl, aryl, heterocyclic and alkenes) and R¹ (R¹ = methyl, ethyl and alkyl) groups).
- 20 18. The method according to clause 10 wherein said alcohols are methanol, ethanol, propanol, butanol, benzyl alcohols, isopropanol, hexanol, octanol, nonanol, hexadecanol and octadecanol.
19. The method according to clause 10 wherein said alcohols are derived from biomass.
- 25 20. The method according to clause 10 wherein said alcohols are derived from triglycerides.
21. The method according to clause 10 wherein said alcohols fatty acids.
- 30 22. The method according clause 10 wherein said alcohols are derived from wood.
23. The method according clause 10 wherein said alcohols are derived from fermentation.
24. The method according clause 10 wherein said alcohols are derived from wood.
- 35 25. The method according clause 10 wherein said alcohols are derived from algae.
26. The method according clause 10 wherein said alcohols are derived from fossil based material.
- 40 27. The method according clause 10 wherein said alcohols are derived from gasification.
28. The method according clause 10 wherein said alcohols are derived from pyrolysis.
- 45 29. The method according to clause 10 wherein said aldehydes are acetaldehyde, formaldehyde, propanal, butanal, pentanal, hexanal, octanal, 2,4-Hexadienal, cinnamic aldehydes and benzylic aldehydes.

30. The method according to clauses 1-9 in which the aldehyde, ketone, alcohol or acetal is provided by first (i) providing alcohols; (ii) providing an oxidant (air, O₂, NaClO); (iii) optionally providing an oxidation catalysts system which is a Tempo, CuBr, bpy, NMI, O₂; or Tempo, HNO₃, HCl, O₂; or Tempo, NaOCl, KBr; or a heterogeneous supported metal catalyst (Pd, Ag, Ru, Ir, Fe); or a homogeneous catalyst system (Pd, Ag, Ru, Ir, Fe) and (iii) converting the alcohol; in the presence of said oxidation catalyst system.

then

(v) providing aldehydes; or ketones (vi) providing an amine catalyst system (vii) optionally including an acid; or salt (viii) converting the aldehyde; or ketone, in the presence of said catalyst system or salt (viii) providing enals; or enones (ix) providing a reducing agent (formic acid, H₂, ammonium formate); (x) optionally providing a catalyst which is heterogeneous supported metal catalyst (Pd, Ag, Ru, Ir, Fe, Ni, Co), or a homogeneous organometallic complex (Pd, Ag, Ru, Ir, Fe, Ni, Co); reducing the enals; or enones, optionally in the presence of said catalyst. (xii) providing aldehydes; or ketones; or alcohols; or acetals.

Claims

1. A method for conversion of a starting alcohol being derived from any of biomass, triglycerides, wood, algae, fossil-based material, and syngas, or the starting alcohol is generated through any of fermentation and pyrolysis, or the starting alcohol is a fatty alcohol, wherein the method is performed in one-pot procedure without any purification of intermediates, , comprising:
 - (i) oxidizing the starting alcohol to a corresponding aldehyde or ketone, wherein the oxidizing is performed with an oxidant and a catalyst, the oxidant being any one of oxygen, air, hydrogen peroxide, and sodium hypochlorite, and the catalyst being any one of a heterogeneous supported metal catalyst, a homogeneous organometallic complex, a metal-free catalyst, and an enzyme;
 - (ii) condensation of the corresponding aldehyde or ketone to an enal or enone using a metal-free condensation catalyst; and
 - (iii) reducing, using a heterogeneous metal catalyst and a reducing agent, the enal or enone to a product, said product being an alcohol, an aldehyde, a ketone, an acetal or a ketal, wherein the product has a longer chain than the chain of the starting alcohol.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said starting alcohol is a primary alcohol of formula $R-CH_2-OH$, wherein R is a H, an alkyl, an aryl, an alkenyl, or a heterocyclic group.
3. The method according to claim 1, wherein said starting alcohol is a secondary alcohol of formula $R-CH(OH)-R^1$, wherein R is a H, an alkyl, an aryl, an alkenyl, or a heterocyclic group and R^1 is an alkyl.
4. The method according to any one of the previous claims, comprising repeating the steps of claim 1, using the product alcohol as the starting alcohol.
5. The method according to any one of the previous claims, wherein the condensation of aldehydes is performed with an organocatalyst or a salt thereof, and the catalyst is pyrrolidine, proline, ammonium formate or glycine, optionally in the presence of an acid, such as acetic acid.
6. The method according to any one of the previous claims, wherein reducing is performed with a reduction agent, which is formic acid, H_2 , ammonium formate, or Hantzsch ester.
7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the heterogeneous metal catalyst in the reduction is a heterogeneous Pd catalyst and the reduction agent is H_2 -gas.

8. The method according to any one of the previous claims, comprising the steps of:
- (i) providing the starting alcohol,
 - (ii) providing an oxidant, such as air, H₂O₂, O₂, or NaOCl,
 - 5 (iii) providing an oxidizing catalyst, such as a heterogeneous supported metal catalyst, or a homogeneous organometallic complex, or a metal-free catalyst (mediator), or an oxidizing enzyme (EC 1:10:3:2) and oxidizing the starting alcohol, in the presence of said oxidizing catalyst, into the corresponding aldehyde or ketone,
 - (iv) providing a metal-free condensation catalyst system,
 - 10 (v) optionally including an acid or a salt thereof, and converting the corresponding aldehyde or ketone, in the presence of said condensation catalyst system, into the enal or enone,
 - (vi) providing a reducing agent, such as formic acid, H₂, ammonium formate, or Hantzsch ester,
 - 15 (vii) providing a reducing catalyst, which is a heterogeneous metal catalyst and reducing the enal or enone, optionally in the presence of said reducing catalyst, into the product.
9. The method according to claim 8, wherein the condensation catalyst system is an organocatalytic system or a salt thereof.
- 20 10. The method according to claim 8, wherein said starting alcohol is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, butanol, benzyl alcohol, isopropanol, hexanol, octanol, nonanol and octadecanol.
- 25 11. The method according to claim 8, wherein said corresponding aldehyde is acetaldehyde, formaldehyde, propanal, butanal, pentanal, hexanal, octanal, 2,4-Hexadienal, cinnamic aldehyde or benzylic aldehyde.
12. The method according to any one of the previous claims, comprising:
- 30 (i) providing the starting alcohol,
 - (ii) providing an oxidant, such as air, O₂, or NaClO,
 - (iii) providing an oxidation catalysts system, such as TEMPO, CuBr, bpy, NMI, O₂; or TEMPO, HNO₃, HCl, O₂; or TEMPO, NaOCl, KBr; or a heterogeneous supported metal catalyst (Pd, Ag, Ru, Ir, or Fe); or a homogeneous catalyst system (Pd, Ag, Ru, Ir, or Fe)
 - 35 and converting the starting alcohol, in the presence of said oxidation catalyst system, into the corresponding aldehyde or ketone,
 - (iv) providing an amine catalyst system or a salt thereof,
 - (v) optionally including an acid, and converting the corresponding aldehyde or ketone, in the presence of said amine catalyst system or the salt thereof, optionally including an
 - 40 acid, into the enal or enone,

(vi) providing a reducing agent, such as formic acid, H₂, or ammonium formate,
(vii) providing a reducing catalyst, which is a heterogeneous metal catalyst; and
reducing the enal or enone, optionally in the presence of said reducing catalyst, into the
product.

5

13. The method according to any one of the previous claims, wherein the method is
performed in one-pot procedure without any purification of intermediates comprising:
- providing the starting alcohol, which is a microwave-vial containing ethanol (1 mmol),
 - providing an oxidation catalysts system, which is TEMPO (1 mol%) in CHCl₂ (2.5 ml),
10 which is sonicated for 3 minutes and cooled to 10°C under stirring, where after cooled
NaBr (10 mol%) and NaOCl (2.8 equiv.) is added and the pH adjusted to 9 by sat.
NaHCO₃,
 - providing an oxidant, which is a balloon filled with O₂-gas at 10°C under stirring for 3
hours, and converting the starting alcohol into the corresponding aldehyde or ketone,
 - 15 - adding toluene (0.5 ml) and pyrrolidine (5 mol%) and acetic acid (5 mol%) at room
temperature under stirring for 3 hours, and converting the corresponding aldehyde or
ketone into the enal or enone,
 - cooling to room temperature,
 - adding a reducing catalyst, which is MCF-AmP-Pd(0) (5 mol%), and a reducing agent,
20 which is a balloon filled with H₂ gas, and under stirring for 3 hours at room temperature
and reducing the enal or enone into the product.