

ABSTRACT
OLEFIN HYDRATION PROCESS

This invention relates to a process for hydrating olefins to the corresponding alcohols in the vapour phase in the presence of a catalyst system comprising a heteropolyacid catalyst supported on a clay support, the clay support being a hot acid treated clay. The hot acid treated clay is prepared by progressively leaching a commercial bentonite type clay with hot acid to enable the cations in the clay to be exchanged for hydrogen ions leading to a clay support of surface area greater than 50 m²/g. By using the specific acid treated clays as support, it is possible not only to increase the space-time-yield of the process but also to prolong the life of the support thereby reducing the frequency with which the support is changed or replaced on a plant.