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(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB98/03448 (22) International Filing Date: 16 November 1998 (16.11.98) (30) Priority Data: 9725419.7 2 December 1997 (02.12.97) GB (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): TIOXIDE SPECIALTIES LIMITED [GB/GB]; Lincoln House, 137-143 Hammersmith Road, London W14 0QL (GB). (72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): RIDLAND, John [GB/GB]; 12 Oatlands Way, Durham, County Durham DH1 5GL (GB). HEPPLEWHITE, Iain, Wesley [GB/GB]; 28 Rievaulx Avenue, Billingham, Teesside TS23 2BL (GB). (74) Agents: JACKSON, John, Derek et al.; ICI Group Intellectual Property, P.O. Box 90, Wilton, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS90 8JE (GB).		(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG). Published <i>With international search report.</i>
(54) Title: ESTERIFICATION CATALYSTS (57) Abstract An organometallic compound suitable for use as a catalyst for the preparation of an ester comprises the reaction product of an orthoester or condensed orthoester of titanium, zirconium or aluminium, an alcohol containing at least two hydroxyl groups, an organophosphorus compound containing at least one P-OH group and a base. A process for the preparation of an ester comprises carrying out an esterification reaction in the presence of the catalyst. In a further embodiment the organometallic compound suitable for use as a catalyst in an esterification process comprises the reaction product of, in addition, a 2-hydroxy carboxylic acid.		