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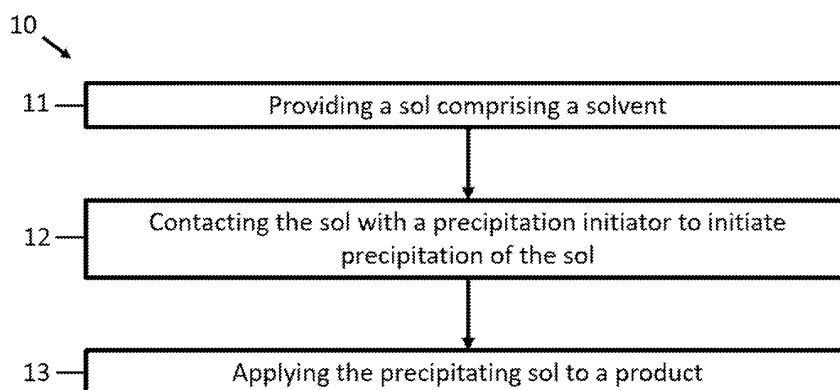


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: A method comprising providing a sol comprising a solvent; contacting the sol with a precipitation initiator to initiate precipitation of the sol, wherein the precipitation initiator is different to the solvent; and applying the precipitating sol to a product. The methods of the invention may be used with sols comprising a solvent, a metal alkoxide, and optionally a biopolymer and/or a catalyst, with alkoxides comprising metals, organically modified alkoxides comprising metals, alkoxides comprising metalloids, and organically modified alkoxides comprising metalloids all being encompassed by the term 'metal alkoxide'. Also disclosed is an apparatus for use in the method comprising a first storage vessel; a second storage vessel; one or more pumps; and one or more delivery means.

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