# **Supporting Information**

# Sulfonated N-heterocyclic Carbenes for Suzuki Coupling in Water

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### **Experimental**

#### **General Experimental:**

All chemicals were purchased as reagent grade from commercial suppliers and used without further purification, unless otherwise noted. All solvents were used as technical grade purity. DMSO (crowncap) was purchased from *Fluka*.

Proton ( $^{1}$ H NMR), carbon ( $^{13}$ C NMR) and phosphorus ( $^{31}$ P NMR) nuclear magnetic resonance spectra were recorded on Bruker DRX 500 at 500 MHz, 125.75 MHz and 202.46, respectively or on Bruker DRX 300 at 300 MHz and 75.07 MHz respectively at 293 K. The chemical shifts are given in parts per million (ppm) on the delta scale ( $\delta$ ) and are referenced to residual non deuterated solvent signals. Abbreviations for NMR data: s = singlet; d = doublet; d = doublet; d = doublet of triplets; d = doublet of quartets; d = doublet of triplets; d = doublet of quartets; d = doublet of triplets; d = doublet of a Finnigan MAT 95 magnetic sector spectrometer. Thin layer chromatography (TLC) was performed using TLC plates  $d = \text{RP}_{18} + 254 + 2$ 

GC experiments were run on a *Clarus* 500 GC with autosampler and FID detector. Column: Varian CP-Sil 8 CB (l=15 m,  $d_i=0.25$  mm,  $d_F=1.0$   $\mu$ m),  $N_2$  (flow: 17 cm/sec; split 1:50); Injector-temperature: 270 °C, detector temperature: 350 °C. Temperature program: isotherm 150°C for 5 min, heating to 300°C with 25 °C/min, isotherm for 15 min.

**4-sodiumsulfonato-2,6-dimethyl-aniline:** In a 500 mL 2-necked round bottomed flask 2,6-dimethylaniline (36.4 g, 300 mmol) was dropped to a mixture of conc. sulfuric acid (30.6 g, 300 mmol) and water (55 mL) within 20 min using a metal bath, the resulting clear solution was treated at 160 °C at 4 mbar without stirring to remove most of the water (30 min), a white

solid was formed. Then the temperature was raised to 260 °C for 3.5 h (baking process). The resulting grey solid was allowed to cool to 80 °C, NaOH (300 mL, 1.7 M aqueous solution) was added and the reaction mixture refluxed for additional 1.5 h. The hot mixture was filtered over a paper filter, then acidified with conc. HCl to pH 1.5. The precipitated grey solid was separated via suction filtration, suspended in water (350 mL), activated charcoal (2.0 g) was added, the solution was adjusted to pH 8 adding by Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, and the solution was refluxed for 20 min. After hot filtration of the solution some NaCl (50 g) was added and the solution allowed standing in a fridge overnight. The crystallized product was separated via suction filtration and the water removed in vacuo affording 4-sodiumsulfonato-2,6-diisopropyl-aniline as off-white crystals (34 g, 51 %).

The NMR data are identical to those in the literature (ref. 32).

4-sodiumsulfonato-2,6-diisopropyl-aniline: In a 500 mL two-necked round bottomed flask 2,6-diisopropylaniline (44.3 g, 250 mmol) was dropped to a mixture of conc. sulfuric acid (25.5 g, 250 mmol) and water (46 mL) within 20 min. The resulting white solid was afterwards crushed several times with a glass rod. Using a metal bath, the reaction mixture was treated at 160 °C at 4 mbar without stirring to remove most of the water. Then the temperature was raised to 260 °C for 3.5 h (baking process). The resulting grey solid was allowed to cool to 80 °C, NaOH (240 mL, 1.7 M aqueous solution) was added and the reaction mixture refluxed for additional 1.5 h. The hot mixture was filtered over a paper filter, then acidified with conc. HCl to pH 1.5. The precipitated grey solid was separated via suction filtration, suspended in water (350 mL), activated charcoal (2.0 g) was added, the pH was adjusted to 8 adding Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>, and the solution was refluxed for 20 min. After hot filtration of the solution some NaCl (50 g) was added and the solution allowed to stand in a fridge overnight. The crystallized product was separated via suction filtration and the water removed in vacuo affording 4-sodiumsulfonato-2,6-diisopropyl-aniline as dark grey crystals (46 g, 66 %). The NMR data are identical to those in the literature. G. J. P. Brotovsek, G. Y. Y. Woo, N. Assavathorn, J. Organomet. Chem. 2003, 679, 110.

$$-O_3S$$
 $Na^+$ 
 $N$ 
 $N$ 
 $N$ 
 $Na^+$ 

In a 2 L round-bottomed flask 4-sodiumsulfonato-2,6-dimethyl-aniline (5.0 g, 22.4 mmol) were dissolved in EtOH (150 mL, dried over CaH<sub>2</sub>). 2,3-dihydroxy-1,4-dioxane (1.22 g, 10.2

mmol) and formic acid (15 drops) were added to the clear solution. Within 30 min a yellow solid started to precipitate, the suspension was stirred for additional 48 h at room temperature. Then the yellow solid was separated via suction filtration, digerated in boiling EtOH (3 times, 200 mL) to remove traces of starting material (aniline) and the volatiles removed in vacuo to afford the product as a yellow solid (1.8 g, 38 %)

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO<sub>d6</sub>) δ [ppm] 8.15 (s, 2 H, *CH*, *CH*=N), 7.37 (s, 4 H, *CH*, ar), 2.12 (s, 12 H, *CH*<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125.8 MHz, DMSO<sub>d6</sub>) δ [ppm] 164.1, 150.0, 144.5, 125.8, 125.5, 18.2; MS (70 eV) m/z 445 [M-Na]<sup>-</sup> (neg.), 491 [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> (pos.).

$$-O_3S$$
 $-N$ 
 $N$ 
 $-SO_3$ 
 $-SO_3$ 
 $-SO_3$ 

In a 250 mL round bottomed flask 4-sodiumsulfonato-2,6-diisopropyl-aniline (13.0 g, 46.5 mmol) were dissolved in EtOH (150 mL, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub>). 2,3-dihydroxy-1,4-dioxane (2.54 g, 21.2 mmol) and formic acid (7 drops) were added to the clear solution. Within 30 min a yellow solid precipitated, the suspension was stirred for additional 48 h at room temperature. Then the yellow solid was separated via suction filtration, washed with ice-cold EtOH and the volatiles removed in vacuo to afford the product as a yellow solid (12.3 g, 76 %). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO<sub>d6</sub>)  $\delta$  [ppm] 8.15 (s, 2 H, *CH*, *CH*=N), 7.45 (s, 4 H, *CH*, ar), 2.86 (sept,  ${}^{3}J$  = 6.9 Hz, 4 H, *CH*CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.15 (d,  ${}^{3}J$  = 6.9 Hz, 24 H, *CH*<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125.8 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  [ppm] 163.8, 148.3, 144.9, 135.6, 120.8, 28.0, 23.4; MS (70 eV) m/z 557 [M-Na]<sup>-</sup> (neg.), 603 [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> (pos.).

(1.01 g, 2.16 mmol) of the tetramethyldiimine were suspended in MeOH (220 mL, dried over CaH<sub>2</sub>). Molecular sieves (3 g, 4 Å) and Pd/C (150 mg, Pd: 10 % (w/w)) were added and the mixture hydrogenated for 2 h at 7 bar. The reaction mixture was filtered over a pad of celite to remove the catalyst and the molecular sieves and the pad was washed with MeOH (2 x 20

mL). Removal of the MeOH from the clear colourless filtrate afforded the product (0.99 g, 98 %) as a white solid

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO<sub>d6</sub>) δ [ppm] 7.18 (s, 4 H, *CH*, ar), 4.06 (s (br), 2 H, N*H*), 3.07 (s, 4 H, *CH*), 2.20 (s, 12 H, C*H*<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125.8 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) δ [ppm] 147.7, 142.1, 128.9, 127.3, 49.3, 19.9; MS (70 eV) m/z 449 [M-Na] (neg.), 495 [M+Na] (pos.).

(10.1 g, 2.16 mmol) of the tetraisopropyldiimine was suspended in MeOH (220 mL, technical grade) and Pd/C (1.50 g, Pd: 10 %(w/w)) were added and the mixture hydrogenated for 6 h at 7 bar. The reaction mixture was filtered over a pad of celite to remove the catalyst and the pad was washed with MeOH (2 x 20 mL). Removal of the MeOH from the clear colourless filtrate afforded the product (10.0 g, 99 %) as a white solid. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  [ppm] 7.33 (s, 4 H, *CH*, ar), 3.92 (s (br), 2 H, N*H*), 3.46-3.33 (m, H, *CHCH*<sub>3</sub>), 1.17 (d, <sup>3</sup>*J* = 6.9 Hz, 24 H, *CH*<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125.8 MHz, DMSO<sub>d6</sub>)  $\delta$  [ppm] 144.4, 143.1, 141.6, 121.1, 52.1, 27.3, 24.6; MS (70 eV) m/z 561 [M-Na]<sup>-</sup> (neg.), 607 [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> (pos.).

## General procedure for the synthesis of sulfonated Imidazolinium salts

The respective sulfonated diamine (1 eq) and NH<sub>4</sub>Cl (1 eq) were weight in a round-bottom flask equipped with a reflux condenser. The solids were suspended in a mixture of EtOH (10 mL/mmol) and HC(OEt)<sub>3</sub> (10 eq) containing one drop of HCOOH. The reaction mixture was stirred at 120 °C overnight. Afterwards the reflux condenser was replaced by a distillation head and the solvent was distilled off. The residue was again suspended in a minimum amount of EtOH and filtered off. Purification was achieved by column chromatography (HP-20) using water-methanol mixtures as eluent.

$$-O_3S$$
  $\longrightarrow$   $N + N - SO_3$   $Na^+$   $N - Na^+$ 

This residue (1.1 g) was purified by reversed phase column-chromatography (stationary phase: HP 20, column: 30 x 5 cm, eluent: pure water, then switched to water:MeOH (10:1)) to afford the product as an off white solid (760 mg, 76 %),  $R_f = 0.53$  (H<sub>2</sub>O:MeOH (10:1), RP-18 silica), <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  [ppm] 9.49 (s, 1 H, N-CH-N), 7.58 (s, 4 H, CH, ar), 4.53 (s, 4 H, NCH<sub>2</sub>-CH<sub>2</sub>), 3.12-3.04 (m, 4 H, CH, iPr), 1.34 (d, 3J = 6.7 Hz, 12 H, CH<sub>3</sub>), 1.19 (d, <sup>3</sup>J = 6.8 Hz, 12 H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125.8 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  [ppm] 159.7, 150.2, 145.2, 129.2, 121.2, 53.1, 27.7, 24.4, 22.8.

$$Me$$
  $Me$   $N_3$   $N_4$   $N_4$   $N_4$   $N_4$   $N_4$   $N_4$   $N_4$ 

This residue (900 mg) was purified by reversed phase column-chromatography (stationary phase: HP 20, column: 30 x 5 cm, eluent : pure water, then switched to water : MeOH (10:1)) to afford the product as an off white solid (500 mg, 63 %),  $R_f = 0.50$  (H<sub>2</sub>O, RP<sub>18</sub> silica), <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  [ppm] 9.05 (s, 1 H, N-C*H*-N), 7.47 (s, 4 H, C*H*, ar), 4.48 (s, 4 H, N-C*H*<sub>2</sub>-C*H*<sub>2</sub>), 2.40 (s, 12 H, *CH*<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125.8 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>)  $\delta$  [ppm] 160.6, 150.0, 135.7, 133.5, 126.4, 51.2, 17.7; MS (70 eV) m/z 437 [M-Na]<sup>-</sup> (neg.).

### Procedures for the synthesis of the Imidazolium salts

$$-O_3S$$
 $-N$ 
 $+$ 
 $N$ 
 $-SO_3$ 
 $Na^+$ 
 $Na^+$ 

In a 25 mL Schlenk tube the tetramethyldiimine (1.22 g, 2.6 mmol) was suspended in DMSO (13 mL) and chloromethylpivalate (577 mg, 3.8 mmol) was added. The reaction mixture was stirred at 45 °C for 3 days. Then the DMSO was removed in vacuo to leave a brownish solid. This residue was purified by reversed phase column-chromatography (stationary phase: HP 20, column: 30 x 5 cm, eluent: pure water, then switched to water: MeOH (40:1)) to afford

the product as an off white solid (1.10 g, 92 %),  $R_f = 0.55$  (H<sub>2</sub>O,  $RP_{18}$  silica), <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz,  $DMSO_{d6}$ )  $\delta$  [ppm] 9.73 (t, <sup>4</sup>J = 1.5 Hz, 1 H, N-CH-N), 8.32 (d, <sup>4</sup>J = 1.5 Hz, 2 H, N-CH-CH), 7.57 (s, 4 H, CH, ar), 2.17 (s, 12 H, CH<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125.8 MHz,  $DMSO_{d6}$ )  $\delta$  [ppm] 150.8, 138.9, 134.6, 133.4, 126.2, 125.0, 17.4; MS (70 eV) m/z. 511.2 [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> (pos.).

$$-O_3S \xrightarrow{iPr} N \xrightarrow{iPr} SO_3$$

$$iPr H iPr$$

In a 25 mL Schlenk tube the tetraisopropyl-diimine (2.03 g, 3.5 mmol) was suspended in DMSO (13 mL) and chloromethylpivalate (774 mg, 5.14 mmol) was added. The reaction mixture was stirred at 45 °C for 3 days. Then the DMSO was removed in vacuo to leave a brownish solid. This residue was purified by reversed phase column-chromatography (stationary phase: HP 20, column: 30 x 5 cm, eluent: pure water, then switched to water:MeOH (10:1)) to afford the product as an off white solid (1.9 g, 95 %),  $R_f = 0.50$  (H<sub>2</sub>O:MeOH (10:1),  $RP_{18}$  silica), <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz,  $DMSO_{d6}$ )  $\delta$  [ppm] 10.22 (t, <sup>4</sup>J = 1.5 Hz, 1 H, N-CH-N), 8.57 (d, <sup>4</sup>J = 1.5 Hz, 2 H, N-CH-CH), 7.67 (s, 4 H, CH, ar), 2.40-2.34 (m, 4 H, CH, iPr), 1.26 (d, <sup>3</sup>J = 7.0 Hz, 12 H,  $CH_3$ ), 1.16 (d, <sup>3</sup>J = 8.5 Hz, 12 H,  $CH_3$ ); <sup>13</sup>C{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125.8 MHz,  $DMSO_{d6}$ )  $\delta$  [ppm] 152.6, 145.5, 140.5, 130.9, 127.3, 122.5, 29.7, 25.1, 24.1; MS (70 eV) m/z 593 [M+Na]<sup>+</sup> (pos.), 547 [M-Na]<sup>-</sup> (neg.).

# Scanned NMR of spectra of the newly synthesized compounds



































