

# Supporting Information

## Role of Lewis Acid/Base Anchor Atoms in Catalyst Regeneration: A Comprehensive Study on Biomimetic EP<sub>3</sub>Fe Nitrogenases

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## 1. Theoretical section (sample input files ORCA 4.1.2)

### Geometry optimization

```
!PAL [number of processors]
! RI BP86 ZORA ZORA-def2-SVP def2/J d3bj VerySlowConv tightscf Opt Freq
%scf MaxIter 1500 end
%method Z_tol 1e-6 end
%freq Temp 195 end
```

```
* xyz [charge] [multiplicity]
[initial guess of geometry]
*
```

### Single-point energy calculations (in diethyl ether solution)

```
!PAL [number of processors]
! RIJCOSX wB97X-D3 ZORA ZORA-def2-TZVP def2/J CPCM
%scf MaxIter 500 end
%method Z_tol 1e-6 end
%freq Temp 195 end
%cpcm smd true SMDsolvent "diethyl ether" end
```

```
* xyz [charge] [multiplicity]
[optimized geometry]
*
```

### Verification of methodology

Table S1 . Comparison of bond lengths and angles calculated at BP86 and  $\omega$ B97X-D3 levels of theory

Structure	<u>BP86 geometry</u>							<u><math>\omega</math>B97X-D3 geometry</u>						
	Bond distances (d) in Å							Bond distances (d) in Å						
	Bond angles ( $\alpha$ ) in degrees							Bond angles ( $\alpha$ ) in degrees						
	Fe-P			Fe-X	$\alpha$ (P-Fe-P)			Fe-P			Fe-X	$\alpha$ (P-Fe-P))		
PP <sub>3</sub> Fe	2.21	2.20	2.21	2.09	115	113	131	2.25	2.23	2.24	2.10	116	114	128
NP <sub>3</sub> Fe	2.21	2.18	2.18	2.33	115	113	129	2.25	2.18	2.20	2.29	120	117	123

## 2. Computation of molecular Gibbs free energies (G), bond lengths, ADCH charges, cDFT indices, and binding affinities (A)

### 2.1. Equations utilised

#### Calculation of Molecular Gibbs Free Energy:

The Gibbs free energy (G) was calculated for each molecule by adding the single-point electronic energy ( $E_{\omega B97X-D3}$ ) to the thermal correction to Gibbs free energy resulting from vibration analysis ( $(G - E)_{BP86}$ ):

$$G = E_{\omega B97X-D3} + (G - E)_{BP86} \quad (1)$$

Thermal corrections were computed at 195 K temperature and 1 atm pressure, corresponding to the typically applied experimental conditions.<sup>21</sup>

The Gibbs free energies computed in the gas phase were then corrected to account for different concentrations using the following equation:

$$G(c = x M) = G(c = 0.0625 M) + RT \times \ln \frac{Q(c = x M)}{Q(c = 0.0625 M)} \quad (2)$$

The molar concentration is given in parenthesis;  $x$  represents the molar concentration at which the Gibbs free energy is to be calculated, and  $Q$  represents the reaction quotient. This formula gives a correction of -1.28 kcal/mol in the case of  $\text{NH}_3$  release, and a correction of +1.28 kcal/mol in  $\text{N}_2$  coordination steps ( $x = 2.3 \text{ mM}$  was used as this is the experimental concentration of the catalyst that resulted in the highest turnover number).<sup>24</sup>

The highest turnover number observed was in the presence of 162 mol equiv of reductant and 322 mol equiv of acid,<sup>24</sup> and after replacing these values into equation 2, we get a correction of 1.97 kcal/mol to be subtracted from the Gibbs free energy of electron addition steps, and a correction of 2.24 kcal/mol to be subtracted from the Gibbs free energy of proton addition steps.

#### Calculation of Conceptual Density Functional Theory (cDFT) indices:

Conceptual Density Functional Theory (cDFT) offers a framework for understanding molecular behavior using electronic densities, providing insights into reactivity, allowing for predictive and interpretative analyses.<sup>49</sup>

The electronegativity index is defined according to the following equation:<sup>50</sup>

$$\chi^- = E(N - 1) - E(N) = I \quad (3)$$

$$\chi^+ = E(N) - E(N + 1) = A \quad (4)$$

$$\chi = \frac{\chi^- + \chi^+}{2} = \frac{I + A}{2} \quad (5)$$

Where N refers to the number of electrons carried by the chemical system at its most stable status, and I and A are the ionizing energy and the electron affinity of the neutral atom respectively. This formula is the same as proposed by Mulliken to calculate electronegativity.<sup>49,50</sup>

The hardness ( $\eta$ ) is defined according to the following equation:<sup>51</sup>

$$\eta = I - A \quad (6)$$

Softness, S is considered as the reciprocal of the hardness:

$$S = \frac{1}{\eta} \quad (7)$$

The electrophilicity index ( $\omega$ ) is defined according to the following equation:<sup>49,52</sup>

$$\omega = \frac{\mu^2}{2\eta} \quad (8)$$

Where  $\mu$  is the electronic chemical potential which is calculated by multiplying the electronegativity ( $\chi$ ) by a minus.

### **Calculation of Binding Affinities (Gibbs Free Energies of N<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> Coordination):**

The affinity (A) of a small X<sub>2</sub> molecule (i. e. N<sub>2</sub> or H<sub>2</sub>) to the iron center can be quantified by the negative Gibbs free energy change (- $\Delta G$ ) of the reaction EP<sub>3</sub>Fe + X<sub>2</sub> → EP<sub>3</sub>Fe-X<sub>2</sub>, which derives from the molecular Gibbs free energies (G) as:

$$A_{X_2} = -\Delta G_{EP_3Fe + X_2 \rightarrow Fe-X_2} = G_{EP_3Fe} + G_{X_2} - G_{EP_3Fe-X_2} \quad (9)$$

## 2.2. Gibbs free energy calculations

**Table S2 .** Calculation of Gibbs free energy required for proton, electron and hydrogen atom release from the acid, reductant and PCET reagent, respectively. All energies are in Hartree if otherwise not stated.  $\Delta G$  values were calculated based on the following equations:

$$\Delta G(\text{H}^+) = G(\text{Ph}_2\text{NH}) - G(\text{Ph}_2\text{NH}_2^+)$$

$$\Delta G(\text{e}^-) = G(\text{Cp}_2^*\text{Co}^+) - G(\text{Cp}_2^*\text{Co})$$

$$\Delta G(\text{H}) = G(\text{Cp}_2^*\text{Co}^+) - G((\text{Cp}^*\text{CoC}_5\text{Me}_5\text{H})^+)$$

$$\Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+) = G(\text{NH}_4^+) - G(\text{NH}_3) + \Delta G(\text{H}^+)$$

Molecule	E [Ha]	G-E [Ha]	G [Ha]	$\Delta G$ [kcal/mol]
Ph <sub>2</sub> NH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-519.689217	0.186134	-519.503083	
Ph <sub>2</sub> NH	-519.262565	0.172803	-519.089762	
<b>H<sup>+</sup> release</b>				<b>259.36</b>
Cp <sub>2</sub> *Co	-2180.525088	0.403473	-2180.121616	
Cp <sub>2</sub> *Co <sup>+</sup>	-2180.419405	0.409662	-2180.009742	
<b>e<sup>-</sup> release</b>				<b>70.20</b>
(Cp*CoC <sub>5</sub> Me <sub>5</sub> H) <sup>+</sup>	-2180.974838	0.418081	-2180.556757	
Cp <sub>2</sub> *Co <sup>+</sup>	-2180.419405	0.409662	-2180.009742	
<b>H atom release</b>				<b>343.25</b>
NH <sub>3</sub>	-56.643965	0.022744	-56.621221	
NH <sub>4</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-57.090538	0.03717650	-57.053362	
<b>NH<sub>3</sub> → NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup></b>				<b>-11.81</b>

**Table S3 .** Gibbs free energies and relative Gibbs free energy data of the intermediates in the catalytic cycle of BP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>. Relative Gibbs free energies  $G_{\text{rel}}$  were calculated based on the following equation:

$$G_{\text{rel}}[\text{kcal/mol}] = G - G(\text{BP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-) + n_{\text{H}^+}[\Delta G(\text{H}^+) - 2.24] + n_{\text{e}^-}[\Delta G(\text{e}^-) - 1.97] + n_{\text{NH}_3}[\Delta G(\text{NH}_3) - 1.28 + \Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+) - 2.24] - n_{\text{N}_2}[\Delta G(\text{N}_2) - 1.28]$$

where  $G$ ,  $G(\text{BP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-)$ ,  $G(\text{NH}_3)$  and  $G(\text{N}_2)$  denote the Gibbs free energy of a given intermediate (in the most stable spin state), the catalyst (BP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>), the ammonia molecule and the dinitrogen molecule, respectively;  $\Delta G(\text{H}^+)$ ,  $\Delta G(\text{e}^-)$  and  $\Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+)$  represent the Gibbs free energy of proton release, electron release and ammonia protonation, respectively, the calculation of which is presented in Table S;  $n_{\text{H}^+}$ ,  $n_{\text{e}^-}$ ,  $n_{\text{NH}_3}$  and  $n_{\text{N}_2}$  stand for the number of particles added to (H<sup>+</sup>, e<sup>-</sup>, N<sub>2</sub>) or released from (NH<sub>3</sub>) the initial catalyst complex until the given intermediate is formed.

Numerical corrections account for the liquid-phase concentrations and the excess amount of acid and reductant.

Complex	Spin State	$\Delta G_{\text{rel}}$ [kcal/mol]
BP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	2	0
BP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH	4	-29.5
BP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-58.0
BP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	3	-68.7
BP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-80.1
BP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	1	-130.5
BP <sub>3</sub> FeN	2	-151.5
BP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	6	-184.9
BP <sub>3</sub> FeNH	5	-210.4
BP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-270.3
BP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub>	4	-290.6
BP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-334.8
BP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	4	-355.8
BP <sub>3</sub> Fe	3	-361.4

BP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	3	-361.9
BP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	2	-338.6

**Table S4 .** Gibbs free energies and relative Gibbs free energy data of the intermediates in the catalytic cycle of NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>. Relative Gibbs free energies G<sub>rel</sub> were calculated based on the following equation:

$$G_{rel}[\text{kcal/mol}] = G - G(\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-) + n_{\text{H}^+}[\Delta G(\text{H}^+) - 2.24] + n_{\text{e}^-}[\Delta G(\text{e}^-) - 1.97] + n_{\text{NH}_3}.[G(\text{NH}_3) - 1.28 + \Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+) - 2.24] - n_{\text{N}_2}.[G(\text{N}_2) - 1.28]$$

where G, G(NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>), G(NH<sub>3</sub>) and G(N<sub>2</sub>) denote the Gibbs free energy of a given intermediate (in the most stable spin state), the catalyst (NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>), the ammonia molecule and the dinitrogen molecule, respectively; ΔG(H<sup>+</sup>), ΔG(e<sup>-</sup>) and ΔG(NH<sub>3</sub> → NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>) represent the Gibbs free energy of proton release, electron release and ammonia protonation, respectively, the calculation of which is presented in Table S; n<sub>H<sup>+</sup></sub>, n<sub>e<sup>-</sup></sub>, n<sub>NH<sub>3</sub></sub> and n<sub>N<sub>2</sub></sub> stand for the number of particles added to (H<sup>+</sup>, e<sup>-</sup>, N<sub>2</sub>) or released from (NH<sub>3</sub>) the initial catalyst complex until the given intermediate is formed. Numerical corrections account for the liquid-phase concentrations and the excess amount of acid and reductant.

Complex	Spin State	ΔG <sub>rel</sub> [kcal/mol]
NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	4	0
NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH	4	-60.8
NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-110.5
NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	1	-94.2
NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-130.4
NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	1	-192.3
NP <sub>3</sub> FeN	2	-179.4
NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	6	-242.1
NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH	5	-244.9
NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-326.9
NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub>	4	-320.6
NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-379.5
NP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	4	-402.8
NP <sub>3</sub> Fe	3	-378.2
NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	3	-385.8
NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	4	-338.6

**Table S5 .** Gibbs free energies and relative Gibbs free energy data of the intermediates in the catalytic cycle of AIP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>. Relative Gibbs free energies G<sub>rel</sub> were calculated based on the following equation:

$$G_{rel}[\text{kcal/mol}] = G - G(\text{AIP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-) + n_{\text{H}^+}[\Delta G(\text{H}^+) - 2.24] + n_{\text{e}^-}[\Delta G(\text{e}^-) - 1.97] + n_{\text{NH}_3}.[G(\text{NH}_3) - 1.28 + \Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+) - 2.24] - n_{\text{N}_2}.[G(\text{N}_2) - 1.28]$$

where G, G(AIP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>), G(NH<sub>3</sub>) and G(N<sub>2</sub>) denote the Gibbs free energy of a given intermediate (in the most stable spin state), the catalyst (AIP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>), the ammonia molecule and the dinitrogen molecule, respectively; ΔG(H<sup>+</sup>), ΔG(e<sup>-</sup>) and ΔG(NH<sub>3</sub> → NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>) represent the Gibbs free energy of proton release, electron release and ammonia protonation, respectively, the calculation of which is presented in Table S; n<sub>H<sup>+</sup></sub>, n<sub>e<sup>-</sup></sub>, n<sub>NH<sub>3</sub></sub> and n<sub>N<sub>2</sub></sub> stand for the number of particles added to (H<sup>+</sup>, e<sup>-</sup>, N<sub>2</sub>) or released from (NH<sub>3</sub>) the initial catalyst complex until the given intermediate is formed. Numerical corrections account for the liquid-phase concentrations and the excess amount of acid and reductant.

Complex	Spin State	ΔG <sub>rel</sub> [kcal/mol]
AIP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	2	0
AIP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH	4	-24.3

AlP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-56.7
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	3	-62.0
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-80.2
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	1	-120.3
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeN	2	-146.9
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	6	-183.5
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeNH	5	-206.4
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-267.0
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub>	4	-291.0
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-333.0
AlP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	4	-351.7
AlP <sub>3</sub> Fe	3	-358.8
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	3	-361.0
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	2	-338.6

**Table S6 .** Gibbs free energies and relative Gibbs free energy data of the intermediates in the catalytic cycle of GaP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>. Relative Gibbs free energies  $G_{rel}$  were calculated based on the following equation:

$$G_{rel}[\text{kcal/mol}] = G - G(\text{GaP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-) + n_{\text{H}^+} \cdot [\Delta G(\text{H}^+) - 2.24] + n_{e^-} \cdot [\Delta G(e^-) - 1.97] + n_{\text{NH}_3} \cdot [G(\text{NH}_3) - 1.28 + \Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+) - 2.24] - n_{\text{N}_2} \cdot [G(\text{N}_2) - 1.28]$$

where  $G$ ,  $G(\text{GaP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-)$ ,  $G(\text{NH}_3)$  and  $G(\text{N}_2)$  denote the Gibbs free energy of a given intermediate (in the most stable spin state), the catalyst ( $\text{GaP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-$ ), the ammonia molecule and the dinitrogen molecule, respectively;  $\Delta G(\text{H}^+)$ ,  $\Delta G(e^-)$  and  $\Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+)$  represent the Gibbs free energy of proton release, electron release and ammonia protonation, respectively, the calculation of which is presented in Table S;  $n_{\text{H}^+}$ ,  $n_{e^-}$ ,  $n_{\text{NH}_3}$  and  $n_{\text{N}_2}$  stand for the number of particles added to ( $\text{H}^+$ ,  $e^-$ ,  $\text{N}_2$ ) or released from ( $\text{NH}_3$ ) the initial catalyst complex until the given intermediate is formed. Numerical corrections account for the liquid-phase concentrations and the excess amount of acid and reductant.

Complex	Spin State	$\Delta G_{rel}$ [kcal/mol]
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	2	0
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH	4	-25.5
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-57.8
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	3	-61.6
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-80.3
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	1	-123.1
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeN	2	-147.2
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	6	-185.2
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeNH	5	-207.3
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-268.1
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub>	4	-290.3
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-332.9
GaP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	4	-352.1
GaP <sub>3</sub> Fe	3	-357.3
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	3	-358.7
GaP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	2	-338.6

**Table S7 .** Gibbs free energies and relative Gibbs free energy data of the intermediates in the catalytic cycle of PP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>. Relative Gibbs free energies  $G_{rel}$  were calculated based on the following equation:

$$G_{\text{rel}}[\text{kcal/mol}] = G - G(\text{PP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-) + n_{\text{H}^+}[\Delta G(\text{H}^+) - 2.24] + n_{\text{e}^-}[\Delta G(\text{e}^-) - 1.97] + n_{\text{NH}_3}[\Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+) - 2.24] - n_{\text{N}_2}[\Delta G(\text{N}_2) - 1.28]$$

where  $G$ ,  $G(\text{PP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-)$ ,  $G(\text{NH}_3)$  and  $G(\text{N}_2)$  denote the Gibbs free energy of a given intermediate (in the most stable spin state), the catalyst ( $\text{PP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-$ ), the ammonia molecule and the dinitrogen molecule, respectively;  $\Delta G(\text{H}^+)$ ,  $\Delta G(\text{e}^-)$  and  $\Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+)$  represent the Gibbs free energy of proton release, electron release and ammonia protonation, respectively, the calculation of which is presented in Table S;  $n_{\text{H}^+}$ ,  $n_{\text{e}^-}$ ,  $n_{\text{NH}_3}$  and  $n_{\text{N}_2}$  stand for the number of particles added to ( $\text{H}^+$ ,  $\text{e}^-$ ,  $\text{N}_2$ ) or released from ( $\text{NH}_3$ ) the initial catalyst complex until the given intermediate is formed. Numerical corrections account for the liquid-phase concentrations and the excess amount of acid and reductant.

Complex	Spin State	$\Delta G_{\text{rel}}$ [kcal/mol]
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-$	2	0
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNNH}$	2	-45.5
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNNH}_2^+$	2	-89.0
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNNH}_2$	1	-68.7
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNNH}_3^+$	3	-109.8
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeN}^+$	1	-174.6
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeN}$	2	-164.4
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNH}^+$	2	-226.9
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNH}$	3	-228.2
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNH}_2^+$	3	-308.0
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNH}_2$	2	-298.5
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNH}_3^+$	2	-356.9
$\text{PP}_3\text{Fe}^+$	4	-384.7
$\text{PP}_3\text{Fe}$	3	-372.6
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeN}_2$	1	-382.6
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-$	2	-338.6

**Table S8** . Gibbs free energies and relative Gibbs free energy data of the intermediates in the catalytic cycle of (1-Cl) $\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-$ . Relative Gibbs free energies  $G_{\text{rel}}$  were calculated based on the following equation:

$$G_{\text{rel}}[\text{kcal/mol}] = G - G((1\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-) + n_{\text{H}^+}[\Delta G(\text{H}^+) - 2.24] + n_{\text{e}^-}[\Delta G(\text{e}^-) - 1.97] + n_{\text{NH}_3}[\Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+) - 2.24] - n_{\text{N}_2}[\Delta G(\text{N}_2) - 1.28]$$

where  $G$ ,  $G((1\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-)$ ,  $G(\text{NH}_3)$  and  $G(\text{N}_2)$  denote the Gibbs free energy of a given intermediate (in the most stable spin state), the catalyst ( $(1\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-$ ), the ammonia molecule and the dinitrogen molecule, respectively;  $\Delta G(\text{H}^+)$ ,  $\Delta G(\text{e}^-)$  and  $\Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+)$  represent the Gibbs free energy of proton release, electron release and ammonia protonation, respectively, the calculation of which is presented in Table S;  $n_{\text{H}^+}$ ,  $n_{\text{e}^-}$ ,  $n_{\text{NH}_3}$  and  $n_{\text{N}_2}$  stand for the number of particles added to ( $\text{H}^+$ ,  $\text{e}^-$ ,  $\text{N}_2$ ) or released from ( $\text{NH}_3$ ) the initial catalyst complex until the given intermediate is formed. Numerical corrections account for the liquid-phase concentrations and the excess amount of acid and reductant.

Complex	Spin State	$\Delta G_{\text{rel}}$ [kcal/mol]
$(1\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-$	2	0.0
$(1\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeNNH}$	4	-53.5
$(1\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeNNH}_2^+$	4	-99.5
$(1\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeNNH}_2$	1	-99.9
$(1\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeNNH}_3^+$	1	-141.4
$(1\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}^+$	1	-177.1
$(1\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}$	2	-175.4
$(1\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeNH}^+$	6	-229.0



(1-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH	5	-236.6
(1-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-315.0
(1-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub>	4	-314.0
(1-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-369.0
(1-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	4	-386.5
(1-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> Fe	3	-369.7
(1-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	3	-378.7
(1-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	2	-338.6

**Table S9.** Gibbs free energies and relative Gibbs free energy data of the intermediates in the catalytic cycle of (2-Cl)NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>. Relative Gibbs free energies  $G_{rel}$  were calculated based on the following equation:

$$G_{rel}[\text{kcal/mol}] = G - G((2\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-) + n_{\text{H}^+}[\Delta G(\text{H}^+) - 2.24] + n_{e^-}[\Delta G(e^-) - 1.97] + n_{\text{NH}_3} \cdot [G(\text{NH}_3) - 1.28 + \Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+) - 2.24] - n_{\text{N}_2} \cdot [G(\text{N}_2) - 1.28]$$

where  $G$ ,  $G((2\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-)$ ,  $G(\text{NH}_3)$  and  $G(\text{N}_2)$  denote the Gibbs free energy of a given intermediate (in the most stable spin state), the catalyst ((2-Cl)NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>), the ammonia molecule and the dinitrogen molecule, respectively;  $\Delta G(\text{H}^+)$ ,  $\Delta G(e^-)$  and  $\Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+)$  represent the Gibbs free energy of proton release, electron release and ammonia protonation, respectively, the calculation of which is presented in Table S;  $n_{\text{H}^+}$ ,  $n_{e^-}$ ,  $n_{\text{NH}_3}$  and  $n_{\text{N}_2}$  stand for the number of particles added to (H<sup>+</sup>, e<sup>-</sup>, N<sub>2</sub>) or released from (NH<sub>3</sub>) the initial catalyst complex until the given intermediate is formed. Numerical corrections account for the liquid-phase concentrations and the excess amount of acid and reductant.

Complex	Spin State	$\Delta G_{rel}$ [kcal/mol]
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	4	0.0
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH	4	-54.8
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-102.0
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	1	-88.3
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	1	-146.8
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	1	-182.3
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN	2	-172.2
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	6	-232.8
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH	5	-238.9
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-318.1
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub>	4	-314.0
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-371.8
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	4	-391.8
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> Fe	3	-372.4
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	3	-379.6
(2-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	4	-338.6

**Table S10.** Gibbs free energies and relative Gibbs free energy data of the intermediates in the catalytic cycle of (3-Cl)NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>. Relative Gibbs free energies  $G_{rel}$  were calculated based on the following equation:

$$G_{rel}[\text{kcal/mol}] = G - G((3\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-) + n_{\text{H}^+}[\Delta G(\text{H}^+) - 2.24] + n_{e^-}[\Delta G(e^-) - 1.97] + n_{\text{NH}_3} \cdot [G(\text{NH}_3) - 1.28 + \Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+) - 2.24] - n_{\text{N}_2} \cdot [G(\text{N}_2) - 1.28]$$

where  $G$ ,  $G((3\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-)$ ,  $G(\text{NH}_3)$  and  $G(\text{N}_2)$  denote the Gibbs free energy of a given intermediate (in the most stable spin state), the catalyst ((3-Cl)NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>), the ammonia molecule and the dinitrogen molecule, respectively;  $\Delta G(\text{H}^+)$ ,  $\Delta G(e^-)$  and  $\Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+)$  represent the Gibbs free energy of proton release, electron release and ammonia protonation, respectively, the calculation of which is presented in Table S;  $n_{\text{H}^+}$ ,  $n_{e^-}$ ,  $n_{\text{NH}_3}$  and  $n_{\text{N}_2}$  stand for the number of particles added to (H<sup>+</sup>, e<sup>-</sup>, N<sub>2</sub>) or released from (NH<sub>3</sub>) the initial catalyst complex until the given

intermediate is formed. Numerical corrections account for the liquid-phase concentrations and the excess amount of acid and reductant.

Complex	Spin State	$\Delta G_{\text{rel}}$ [kcal/mol]
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	4	0.0
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH	4	-50.4
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-99.8
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	3	-88.1
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	1	-145.2
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	1	-180.7
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN	2	-171.1
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	4	-227.0
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH	5	-236.9
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-315.9
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub>	4	-313.5
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-370.0
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	4	-391.6
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> Fe	3	-371.9
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	3	-378.5
(3-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	4	-338.6

**Table S11.** Gibbs free energies and relative Gibbs free energy data of the intermediates in the catalytic cycle of (4-Cl)NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>. Relative Gibbs free energies  $G_{\text{rel}}$  were calculated based on the following equation:

$$G_{\text{rel}}[\text{kcal/mol}] = G - G((4\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-) + n_{\text{H}^+}[\Delta G(\text{H}^+) - 2.24] + n_{\text{e}^-}[\Delta G(\text{e}^-) - 1.97] + n_{\text{NH}_3}[\Delta G(\text{NH}_3) - 1.28 + \Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+) - 2.24] - n_{\text{N}_2}[\Delta G(\text{N}_2) - 1.28]$$

where  $G$ ,  $G((4\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-)$ ,  $G(\text{NH}_3)$  and  $G(\text{N}_2)$  denote the Gibbs free energy of a given intermediate (in the most stable spin state), the catalyst ((4-Cl)NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>), the ammonia molecule and the dinitrogen molecule, respectively;  $\Delta G(\text{H}^+)$ ,  $\Delta G(\text{e}^-)$  and  $\Delta G(\text{NH}_3 \rightarrow \text{NH}_4^+)$  represent the Gibbs free energy of proton release, electron release and ammonia protonation, respectively, the calculation of which is presented in Table S;  $n_{\text{H}^+}$ ,  $n_{\text{e}^-}$ ,  $n_{\text{NH}_3}$  and  $n_{\text{N}_2}$  stand for the number of particles added to (H<sup>+</sup>, e<sup>-</sup>, N<sub>2</sub>) or released from (NH<sub>3</sub>) the initial catalyst complex until the given intermediate is formed. Numerical corrections account for the liquid-phase concentrations and the excess amount of acid and reductant.

Complex	Spin State	$\Delta G_{\text{rel}}$ [kcal/mol]
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub> <sup>-</sup>	4	0.0
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH	4	-49.3
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-101.6
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	3	-89.4
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	1	-153.9
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	1	-188.0
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeN	2	-174.4
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	6	-236.0
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH	3	-233.6
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5	-319.3
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub>	4	-313.1
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>3</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4	-371.0
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	4	-398.9
(4-Cl)NP <sub>3</sub> Fe	3	-378.2

$(4\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2$	1	-378.9
$(4\text{-Cl})\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-$	4	-338.6

### 2.3. Bond lengths

**Table S12.** Bond lengths in Å for the different intermediates involved in the catalytic cycle of BP<sub>3</sub>Fe

	Fe-N	N-N	Fe-B	Fe-P	Fe-P	Fe-P	AVG Fe-P
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup></b>	1.751	1.159	2.286	2.195	2.201	2.236	2.211
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH</b>	1.786	1.237	2.244	2.319	2.346	2.321	2.329
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	1.747	1.272	2.463	2.337	2.374	2.392	2.368
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub></b>	1.721	1.292	2.341	2.230	2.230	2.347	2.269
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	1.804	1.416	2.442	2.360	2.416	2.389	2.388
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sup>+</sup></b>	1.506	-	2.925	2.243	2.246	2.247	2.245
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeN</b>	1.539	-	2.679	2.214	2.216	2.217	2.216
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sup>+</sup></b>	1.747	-	2.551	2.385	2.389	2.391	2.388
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNH</b>	1.779	-	2.289	2.354	2.356	2.354	2.355
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	1.864	-	2.661	2.377	2.389	2.389	2.385
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub></b>	1.910	-	2.409	2.316	2.326	2.348	2.330
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	2.133	-	2.444	2.338	2.388	2.348	2.358
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>Fe<sup>+</sup></b>	-	-	2.132	2.298	2.360	2.349	2.336
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>Fe</b>	-	-	2.376	2.253	2.255	2.258	2.255
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub></b>	1.784	1.148	2.270	2.303	2.304	2.304	2.304

**Table S13.** Bond lengths in Å for the different intermediates involved in the catalytic cycle of GaP<sub>3</sub>Fe

	Fe-N	N-N	Fe-Ga	Fe-P	Fe-P	Fe-P	AVG Fe-P
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup></b>	1.740	1.161	2.480	2.216	2.235	2.250	2.234
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH</b>	1.775	1.239	2.572	2.334	2.344	2.352	2.343
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	1.739	1.273	2.688	2.367	2.412	2.415	2.398
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub></b>	1.715	1.289	2.572	2.238	2.272	2.328	2.279
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	1.794	1.414	2.651	2.396	2.463	2.417	2.425
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sup>+</sup></b>	1.504	-	2.955	2.262	2.271	2.269	2.267
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeN</b>	1.546	-	2.751	2.229	2.234	2.233	2.232
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sup>+</sup></b>	1.747	-	2.740	2.427	2.434	2.431	2.431
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNH</b>	1.763	-	2.576	2.354	2.413	2.372	2.380
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	1.865	-	2.731	2.417	2.432	2.421	2.423
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub></b>	1.902	-	2.591	2.365	2.371	2.338	2.358
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	2.104	-	2.606	2.350	2.406	2.386	2.381
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>Fe<sup>+</sup></b>	-	-	2.576	2.330	2.362	2.362	2.351
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>Fe</b>	-	-	2.498	2.255	2.255	2.256	2.255
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub></b>	1.781	1.148	2.524	2.310	2.316	2.314	2.313

**Table S14.** Bond lengths in Å for the different intermediates involved in the catalytic cycle of AlP<sub>3</sub>Fe

	Fe-N	N-N	Fe-Al	Fe-P	Fe-P	Fe-P	AVG Fe-P
<b>AlP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup></b>	1.744	1.159	2.487	2.203	2.221	2.238	2.221
<b>AlP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH</b>	1.782	1.238	2.586	2.326	2.337	2.340	2.334

$\text{AIP}_3\text{FeNNH}_2^+$	1.741	1.271	2.669	2.370	2.410	2.417	2.399
$\text{AIP}_3\text{FeNNH}_2$	1.716	1.288	2.569	2.238	2.273	2.323	2.278
$\text{AIP}_3\text{FeNNH}_3^+$	1.795	1.414	2.666	2.393	2.468	2.419	2.427
$\text{AIP}_3\text{FeN}^+$	1.504	-	2.963	2.263	2.274	2.272	2.270
$\text{AIP}_3\text{FeN}$	1.548	-	2.720	2.228	2.234	2.233	2.232
$\text{AIP}_3\text{FeNH}^+$	1.747	-	2.764	2.432	2.440	2.438	2.437
$\text{AIP}_3\text{FeNH}$	1.766	-	2.603	2.344	2.416	2.370	2.377
$\text{AIP}_3\text{FeNH}_2^+$	1.865	-	2.736	2.422	2.436	2.425	2.428
$\text{AIP}_3\text{FeNH}_2$	1.905	-	2.616	2.346	2.357	2.373	2.359
$\text{AIP}_3\text{FeNH}_3^+$	2.104	-	2.601	2.346	2.402	2.386	2.378
$\text{AIP}_3\text{Fe}^+$	-	-	2.564	2.327	2.366	2.358	2.350
$\text{AIP}_3\text{Fe}$	-	-	2.460	2.249	2.253	2.250	2.251
$\text{AIP}_3\text{FeN}_2$	1.782	1.147	2.540	2.308	2.314	2.312	2.311

**Table S15.** Bond lengths in Å for the different intermediates involved in the catalytic cycle of  $\text{NP}_3\text{Fe}$

	Fe-N	N-N	Fe- $\text{N}_{\text{anchor}}$	Fe-P	Fe-P	Fe-P	AVG Fe-P
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-$	1.764	1.160	2.827	2.227	2.283	2.232	2.247
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeNNH}$	1.773	1.250	2.916	2.254	2.333	2.238	2.275
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeNNH}_2^+$	1.732	1.278	2.835	2.287	2.397	2.327	2.337
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeNNH}_2$	1.627	1.353	3.303	2.169	2.184	2.194	2.182
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeNNH}_3^+$	1.812	1.400	2.884	2.342	2.344	2.422	2.369
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}^+$	1.517	-	2.483	2.221	2.223	2.223	2.222
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}$	1.561	-	2.487	2.194	2.210	2.219	2.208
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeNH}^+$	1.754	-	2.751	2.410	2.416	2.421	2.416
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeNH}$	1.759	-	2.911	2.290	2.360	2.325	2.325
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeNH}_2^+$	1.881	-	2.894	2.374	2.405	2.381	2.387
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeNH}_2$	1.917	-	2.955	2.257	2.281	2.272	2.270
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeNH}_3^+$	2.137	-	2.839	2.293	2.297	2.297	2.296
$\text{NP}_3\text{Fe}^+$	-	-	2.088	2.257	2.260	2.262	2.260
$\text{NP}_3\text{Fe}$	-	-	2.343	2.179	2.215	2.183	2.192
$\text{NP}_3\text{FeN}_2$	1.774	1.154	2.799	2.228	2.23	2.257	2.238

**Table S16.** Bond lengths in Å for the different intermediates involved in the catalytic cycle of  $\text{PP}_3\text{Fe}$

	Fe-N	N-N	Fe- $\text{P}_{\text{anchor}}$	Fe-P	Fe-P	Fe-P	AVG Fe-P
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeN}_2^-$	1.745	1.156	2.165	2.183	2.194	2.190	2.189
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNNH}$	1.740	1.233	2.134	2.199	2.227	2.209	2.212
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNNH}_2^+$	1.726	1.292	2.204	2.243	2.307	2.250	2.267
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNNH}_2$	1.785	1.309	2.140	2.181	2.227	2.186	2.198
$\text{PP}_3\text{FeNNH}_3^+$	1.815	1.458	2.208	2.253	2.318	2.289	2.287

<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sup>+</sup></b>	1.553	-	2.317	2.234	2.238	2.237	2.236
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeN</b>	1.597	-	2.283	2.191	2.244	2.235	2.223
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sup>+</sup></b>	1.678	-	2.238	2.214	2.231	2.325	2.257
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNH</b>	1.772	-	2.173	2.205	2.231	2.241	2.226
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	1.857	-	2.183	2.284	2.313	2.297	2.298
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub></b>	1.864	-	2.151	2.237	2.279	2.250	2.255
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	2.042	-	2.108	2.235	2.277	2.244	2.252
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>Fe<sup>+</sup></b>	-	-	2.196	2.297	2.297	2.302	2.299
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>Fe</b>	-	-	2.228	2.221	2.216	2.210	2.216
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub></b>	1.763	1.152	2.244	2.277	2.278	2.279	2.278

## 2.4. ADCH charges

**Table S17.** ADCH charges for the different intermediates involved in the catalytic cycle of BP<sub>3</sub>Fe

	Fe	N1	N2	P	P	P	AVG P	B
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup></b>	-0.373	0.173	-0.308	0.146	0.185	0.202	0.177	-0.092
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH</b>	-0.125	-0.034	-0.380	0.204	0.202	0.201	0.202	-0.085
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.044	-0.129	-0.286	0.193	0.192	0.194	0.193	-0.038
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.248	-0.086	-0.331	0.149	0.172	0.207	0.176	-0.202
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.013	-0.397	-0.123	0.185	0.187	0.199	0.190	-0.051
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.165	-0.141	-	0.219	0.217	0.217	0.218	0.100
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeN</b>	-0.225	-0.219	-	0.208	0.209	0.207	0.208	0.041
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sup>+</sup></b>	0.007	-0.394	-	0.199	0.189	0.196	0.195	0.048
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNH</b>	-0.067	-0.426	-	0.208	0.208	0.207	0.208	-0.072
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	0.043	-0.680	-	0.194	0.175	0.189	0.186	0.083
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.032	-0.707	-	0.198	0.162	0.208	0.189	-0.060
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.073	-0.454	-	0.165	0.168	0.180	0.171	-0.056
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>Fe<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.019	-	-	0.187	0.191	0.170	0.183	-0.067
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>Fe</b>	-0.084	-	-	0.169	0.171	0.172	0.171	-0.116
<b>BP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.198	0.104	-0.155	0.194	0.195	0.194	0.194	-0.088

**Table S18.** ADCH charges for the different intermediates involved in the catalytic cycle of GaP<sub>3</sub>Fe

	Fe	N1	N2	P	P	P	AVG P	Ga
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup></b>	-0.435	0.187	-0.306	0.139	0.174	0.188	0.167	0.154
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH</b>	-0.183	-0.044	-0.343	0.192	0.190	0.182	0.188	0.163
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.123	-0.201	-0.014	0.180	0.188	0.191	0.187	0.223
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.189	-0.413	0.040	0.146	0.186	0.211	0.181	0.162
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.074	-0.393	-0.121	0.178	0.188	0.192	0.186	0.188
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.209	-0.100	-	0.211	0.210	0.211	0.211	0.336
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeN</b>	-0.282	-0.191	-	0.197	0.196	0.195	0.196	0.232
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.033	-0.366	-	0.186	0.190	0.197	0.191	0.284
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNH</b>	-0.100	-0.477	-	0.200	0.189	0.193	0.194	0.164
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	0.011	-0.653	-	0.195	0.175	0.184	0.185	0.256
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.109	-0.647	-	0.192	0.155	0.196	0.181	0.157
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.156	-0.430	-	0.168	0.162	0.180	0.170	0.191
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>Fe<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.003	-	-	0.180	0.183	0.152	0.172	0.187
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>Fe</b>	-0.117	-	-	0.161	0.160	0.162	0.161	0.085
<b>GaP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.276	0.146	-0.101	0.179	0.179	0.179	0.179	0.135

**Table S19.** ADCH charges for the different intermediates involved in the catalytic cycle of AlP<sub>3</sub>Fe

	Fe	N1	N2	P	P	P	AVG P	Al
<b>AlP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup></b>	-0.440	0.187	-0.301	0.185	0.139	0.172	0.165	0.145
<b>AlP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH</b>	-0.198	-0.047	-0.329	0.193	0.190	0.184	0.189	0.180

<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.117	-0.228	0.097	0.184	0.189	0.197	0.190	0.211
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.222	-0.387	0.090	0.150	0.189	0.214	0.184	0.161
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.074	-0.392	-0.121	0.181	0.192	0.193	0.189	0.185
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.204	-0.099	-	0.213	0.212	0.213	0.213	0.246
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>FeN</b>	-0.280	-0.187	-	0.199	0.199	0.197	0.198	0.215
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.024	-0.361	-	0.188	0.191	0.199	0.193	0.254
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>FeNH</b>	-0.106	-0.480	-	0.203	0.188	0.193	0.195	0.172
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	0.021	-0.652	-	0.197	0.177	0.188	0.187	0.232
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.121	-0.624	-	0.194	0.157	0.193	0.182	0.159
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.162	-0.426	-	0.172	0.162	0.182	0.172	0.191
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>Fe<sup>+</sup></b>	0.030	-	-	0.172	0.176	0.149	0.166	0.173
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>Fe</b>	-0.100	-	-	0.156	0.156	0.157	0.156	0.080
<b>AIP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.280	0.117	-0.073	0.173	0.174	0.175	0.174	0.148

**Table S20.** ADCH charges for the different intermediates involved in the catalytic cycle of NP<sub>3</sub>Fe

	Fe	N1	N2	P	P	P	AVG P	N <sub>anchor</sub>
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup></b>	-0.293	0.077	-0.347	0.120	0.183	0.189	0.164	-0.032
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH</b>	-0.211	-0.113	-0.413	0.152	0.149	0.190	0.164	-0.054
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.069	-0.305	-0.151	0.141	0.179	0.180	0.167	-0.067
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.319	-0.204	-0.498	0.162	0.159	0.164	0.162	0.005
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.055	-0.514	-0.116	0.174	0.180	0.146	0.167	-0.075
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.203	-0.174	-	0.205	0.203	0.204	0.204	0.000
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeN</b>	-0.260	-0.393	-	0.178	0.190	0.190	0.186	0.014
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sup>+</sup></b>	0.023	-0.458	-	0.165	0.163	0.165	0.164	-0.065
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeNH</b>	-0.082	-0.685	-	0.190	0.197	0.147	0.178	-0.060
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	0.070	-0.821	-	0.166	0.145	0.166	0.159	-0.082
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.153	-0.759	-	0.155	0.149	0.166	0.157	-0.049
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.213	-0.439	-	0.146	0.143	0.146	0.145	-0.057
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>Fe<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.220	-	-	0.159	0.159	0.160	0.160	0.022
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>Fe</b>	-0.359	-	-	0.118	0.136	0.142	0.132	-0.001
<b>NP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.359	0.200	-0.359	0.180	0.120	0.174	0.158	-0.034

**Table S21.** ADCH charges for the different intermediates involved in the catalytic cycle of PP<sub>3</sub>Fe

	Fe	N1	N2	P	P	P	AVG P	P <sub>anchor</sub>
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup></b>	-0.459	0.103	-0.219	0.162	0.163	0.162	0.163	0.174
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH</b>	-0.393	-0.049	-0.354	0.181	0.179	0.176	0.179	0.157
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.282	-0.209	-0.177	0.202	0.191	0.192	0.195	0.154
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.404	-0.335	-0.234	0.181	0.151	0.173	0.168	0.148
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.253	-0.448	-0.142	0.182	0.201	0.186	0.190	0.154
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.278	-0.185	-	0.214	0.213	0.213	0.213	0.163
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeN</b>	-0.335	-0.375	-	0.193	0.189	0.189	0.190	0.173



<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.234	-0.376	-	0.207	0.207	0.203	0.206	0.158
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNH</b>	-0.292	-0.557	-	0.188	0.197	0.186	0.191	0.159
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.180	-0.646	-	0.198	0.212	0.195	0.202	0.146
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.316	-0.680	-	0.192	0.184	0.165	0.180	0.148
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeNH<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup></b>	-0.360	-0.419	-	0.146	0.180	0.191	0.172	0.138
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>Fe<sup>+</sup></b>	-0.181	-	-	0.179	0.177	0.179	0.178	0.056
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>Fe</b>	-0.413	-	-	0.127	0.162	0.171	0.153	0.106
<b>PP<sub>3</sub>FeN<sub>2</sub></b>	-0.464	0.099	-0.168	0.163	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.161

## 2.5. *cDFT indices*

**Table S22.** *cDFT* indices (electrophilicity, nucleophilicity, hardness, softness, and mulliken electronegativity indices) for intermediates prone to undergo reduction (all values are in eV)

Anchor atom	Intermediate	E Index	N Index	Hardness	Softness	Mulliken Electronegativity
B	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5.193	-0.862	4.842	0.207	7.091
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	5.001	-1.862	4.827	0.207	6.949
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	5.462	-1.357	4.487	0.223	7.001
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	3.745	-1.29	5.54	0.181	6.442
	EP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	4.265	-1.394	5.752	0.174	7.005
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	0.478	2.474	6.265	0.160	2.448
P	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	3.157	-0.366	5.462	0.183	5.663
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	3.198	-1.616	5.804	0.172	6.093
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	3.371	-0.814	5.498	0.182	6.088
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	2.606	-0.773	6.011	0.166	5.597
	EP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	3.19	-0.362	5.195	0.193	5.757
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	0.4769	3.0013	4.656	0.2148	2.1073
N	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	3.058	1.85	5.56	0.18	5.831
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	3.084	-1.577	5.959	0.168	6.063
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	4.11	-1.09	5.009	0.2	6.417
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	2.543	-1.029	6.484	0.154	5.743
	EP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	2.752	-0.532	6.244	0.16	5.862
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	0.4389	3.7079	4.3956	0.2275	1.9643
Al	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	4.807	1.094	4.867	0.206	6.84
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	5.565	-2.042	4.657	0.215	7.2
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	5.365	-1.603	4.786	0.209	7.166
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	2.928	-1.594	6.717	0.149	6.271
	EP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	4.173	-1.463	6.014	0.166	7.084
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	0.4353	2.503	6.1899	0.1616	2.3214
Ga	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	5.1159	-1.384	4.9309	0.2028	7.103
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sup>+</sup>	5.4324	-2.0047	4.6943	0.213	7.1416
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sup>+</sup>	5.3105	-1.5454	4.7539	0.2104	7.1057
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	3.0481	-1.5299	6.4588	0.1548	6.2749
	EP <sub>3</sub> Fe <sup>+</sup>	4.0905	-1.3364	5.9626	0.1677	6.9843
	EP <sub>3</sub> FeN <sub>2</sub>	0.4484	2.4857	6.2664	0.1596	2.3706

## 2.6. Binding affinities (A)

**Table S23.** N<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> binding affinities (A) in kcal/mol for the different anchor atom complexes.

Complex	N <sub>2</sub> Binding Affinity (kcal/mol)	H <sub>2</sub> Binding Affinity (kcal/mol)
BP <sub>3</sub> Fe	2.5	-1.4
CP <sub>3</sub> Fe	-0.6	-11.3
SiP <sub>3</sub> Fe	11.3	3.1
AlP <sub>3</sub> Fe	2.6	0.5
GaP <sub>3</sub> Fe	2.9	1.5
NP <sub>3</sub> Fe	8.8	7.1
PP <sub>3</sub> Fe	19.7	18.5

## 2.7. Orbital energies

**Table S24.** EP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> LUMO and EP<sub>3</sub>FeNNH<sub>2</sub> HOMO alpha orbital energies (calculated at ωB97xD/TZVP level of theory) across various anchor atom complexes (all energies are in eV).

Complex	Alpha HOMO	Alpha LUMO	Alpha Gap	Beta HOMO	Beta LUMO	Beta Gap
BP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	-6.510	1.055	7.565	-6.474	0.959	7.433
BP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-8.585	-0.227	8.359	-7.952	-0.962	6.990
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	-6.504	1.159	7.663	-6.684	0.790	7.474
AlP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-8.572	-0.231	8.341	-8.557	-1.130	7.427
NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	-5.656	0.984	6.640	-5.615	0.880	6.495
NP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-7.816	0.053	7.869	-7.980	-0.243	7.737
PP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	-5.614	0.812	6.425	-	-	-
PP <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-7.799	-0.116	7.683	-7.470	-0.150	7.320
N(Cl-1) P <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	-6.369	0.749	7.117	-	-	-
N(Cl-1) P <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-8.001	-0.183	7.818	-8.172	-0.429	7.743
N(Cl-2) P <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	-6.392	0.676	7.068	-	-	-
N(Cl-2) P <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-8.000	-0.249	7.752	-8.075	-0.446	7.629
N(Cl-3) P <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	-6.417	0.666	7.083	-	-	-
N(Cl-3) P <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-8.019	-0.255	7.764	-8.114	-0.470	7.644
N(Cl-4) P <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub>	-6.359	0.658	7.016	-	-	-
N(Cl-4) P <sub>3</sub> FeNNH <sub>2</sub> <sup>+</sup>	-7.894	-0.318	7.576	-7.989	-0.435	7.554