## **Electronic Supplementary Information**

# **Tuning the Acidity and Textural Properties for Enhanced Economical CO<sup>2</sup> Capture in Polyethyleneimine (PEI) Supported Adsorbents**

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#### **Experimental section**

**Materials:** Pseuodoboehmite (PSB) (>99%, Sasol), methanol (>99%, Merck), polyethyleneimine (PEI) and ( $>99\%$ , Sigma Aldrich, M.W.  $\sim$ 800, Mn  $\sim$ 600) were used as obtained without further purification. γ-alumina (γ-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>) was prepared by the calcination of pseudoboehmite (PSB) at 550 °C for 4h.

#### **Synthesis**

#### **Synthesis of PEI@PSB**

The  $PEI@PSB$  is prepared by an incipient wetness impregnation method. In a typical synthesis, 0.25 g of polyethyleneimine (PEI) is dispersed in 10 ml methanol under stirring for 10 min in a 100 ml beaker. To the above solution, 1 g of PSB was added and the resulting mixture was stirred at 30 °C for 1h and dried in an oven at 60 °C for 14h. The obtained samples were denoted as  $25\%$  PEI@PSB (where 25% indicates the weight % of amine loading). Similarly, different weight percent of PEI was impregnated on different supports such as  $\gamma$ -Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and PSB.

#### **Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) analysis**

The successful impregnation of polyethyleneimine (PEI) in the synthesized materials is examined by Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) analysis. The FTIR analysis of powder samples was performed in transmittance mode in the range of 4000-400 cm<sup>-1</sup>. The analysis was performed by ATR technique and the spectrum was averaged 32 times in every analysis.

#### **Pyridine-IR (Py-IR) analysis**

The variation in Brønsted and Lewis acidic sites in unmodified PSB and PEI-impregnated PSB was analyzed by pyridine IR analysis. In a typical experiment, powdered samples were dried at 150 °C in a vacuum for 14 h, cooled and sealed to maintain moisture-free condition. Then the samples were saturated with pyridine under a nitrogen atmosphere and heated at 150 °C for 14 h to remove any physisorbed pyridine. Then the material was cooled down to room temperature and FTIR analysis was performed in absorbance mode from the wavenumber ranging from 1400 cm<sup>-1</sup> to 1600 cm<sup>-1</sup>. Each spectrum of pyridine adsorbed sample was subtracted from that of the pyridine untreated sample to get the peaks specifically due to pyridine interaction with acidic sites in the material.

#### **Static CO<sup>2</sup> uptake experiment**

The static  $CO<sub>2</sub>$  uptake of the material is determined by  $CO<sub>2</sub>$  temperature programmed desorption (TPD) analysis using Altamira AMI-300 Lite instrument. In a typical experiment, around 0.1g of the powder sample was taken in a U-shaped TPD cell. Before the  $CO<sub>2</sub>$  adsorption the material was subjected to pretreatment at 150 °C for 1 h with a ramp rate of 10 °C/min under the flow of helium (20ml/min) to remove any adsorbed gases or impurities from the material. Then the material was allowed to cool down to 75 °C and the sample was treated with 10% CO<sub>2</sub> in helium by passing a gas mixture (5 ml/min CO<sub>2</sub>) and 45 ml/min helium) for 30 mins. Further, the sample was post-flushed with helium to remove excess physisorbed  $CO<sub>2</sub>$ . Then the material was again cooled down to 50  $^{\circ}$ C and the temperature programmed desorption (TPD) analysis was started from 50 °C to 150 °C with a ramp rate of 10 °C with 5 ml/min of helium as carrier gas. The  $CO<sub>2</sub>$  desorbed from the sample was detected by using a TCD detector. The amount of  $CO_2$  desorbed from calculated by calibrating the TCD by a known amount of  $CO_2$  after every analysis.

#### **N<sup>2</sup> physisorption experiment**

The N<sub>2</sub> physisorption experiment was performed via BELSORP max II physisorption analyzer using  $N<sub>2</sub>$  gas as the adsorbate. The experiments were performed at 77 K. The temperature was maintained by keeping liquid Nitrogen in Dewar vessel. The specific surface area and pore size distribution were calculated on the basis of Brunauer–Emmett–Teller (BET) equation and Barret-Joyner-Halenda (BJH) method.

During the experiment small amount of sample  $(200 - 500$  mg) was weighed and transferred into sample tube and vacuumized thoroughly at 75 ℃ for 12 hours to ensure maximum degassing without degrading the amine part present in the samples, prior to the experiment.

#### **Calculation of isosteric heat of adsorption**

The CO<sub>2</sub> adsorption experiment was performed via BELSORP max II physisorption analyzer using  $CO_2$  gas as the adsorbate. During the experiment small amount of sample (200 – 500 mg) was weighed and transferred into sample tube and vacuumized thoroughly at 75 ℃ for 12 hours to ensure maximum degassing without degrading the amine part present in the samples, prior to the experiment. The experiments were performed at two different temperatures: 273 K (0 °C) and 298 K (25 °C). The temperature was maintained by keeping methanol in solvent vessel, and a continuous methanol circulation from chiller.

The obtained CO<sup>2</sup> adsorption points were fitted with Freundlich-Langmuir equation (**Eqn. S1**),

$$
n = \frac{a \cdot b \cdot p^{c}}{1 + b \cdot p^{c}}
$$
Eqn. S1

where n is the amount adsorbed  $CO_2$  in mmol/g, p is the pressure in kPa, a is the maximal loading in mmol/g, b is the affinity constant  $(1/kPa<sup>c</sup>)$  and c is the heterogeneity exponent (the product of  $b \cdot p^c$  is a dimension-less parameter. Based on the non-linear curve fitting the a, b, c can be derived and put into the rearranged version of Freundlich-Langmuir equation (**Eqn. S2**).

$$
p(n) = \sqrt[c]{\frac{n}{a \cdot b - n \cdot b}}
$$
Eqn. S2

A series of p data were derived from the equation, and finally they were replaced accordingly into the Clausius-Clapeyron equation to calculate the isosteric heat of adsorption (**Eqn. S3**).

$$
\Delta H_{ads} = -R \cdot \ln \left( \frac{p_2}{p_1} \right) \frac{T_1 \cdot T_2}{(T_2 - T_1)} \qquad \qquad \text{Eqn.}
$$

#### **Field-emission Scanning Electron Microscope – Energy Dispersive X-ray (FESEM-EDX analysis**

The elemental mapping was performed in Thermofisher Apreo 2S FESEM instrument coupled with EDX. A small amount of the as-synthesized sample was first sonicated with ethanol for 10 minutes and then it was drop-casted over silicon wafer and dried, prior to the analysis.

#### **Powder X-Ray Diffraction (XRD) analysis**

S3

The structural stability of the synthesised sorbents was confirmed by powder XRD analysis. The XRD analysis was performed on PANalytical Empyrean X-ray diffractometer with Cu K $\alpha$  radiation at 45 kV and 40 mA. The measurement was performed using an anti-scatter slit (1°) for an angular range of  $10^{\circ} \le 2\theta \le 80^{\circ}$ . The XRD pattern of PEI@PSB and PEI@γ-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> were compared with PSB and γ- $Al_2O_3$  respectively.

#### **Humid condition CO<sup>2</sup> uptake** *via* **desorption method**

The sample was first exposed to the steam generated by deionised water at 110 ℃ for 2 hours prior to the measurement. Then the humidified material was placed in the U-shapped TPD cell, and it was saturated with  $CO_2$  stream at 75 °C. Followed by the He purging to remove any weakly adsorbed  $CO_2$ , the temperature programmed desorption was performed till 150 ℃.

#### *In-situ* **CO<sup>2</sup> DRIFTS**

The in-situ DRIFTS experiment was performed using a Bruker 70v vertex FTIR equipped with a Harrick DRIFTS cell. The spectra were recorded at 4 cm<sup>-1</sup> resolution and each reading was averaged 32 times. The sample was first activated at 150 ℃ using 1 NLPH nitrogen for 10 mins, and the spectrum of the sample was taken as baseline. Once the temperature is cooled down to 50 ℃, a feed gas containing 1 NLPH CO<sub>2</sub> and 1 NLPH of  $N_2$  is allowed to pass. During this process, at each minute, the spectrum was recorded till the sample is saturated with  $CO<sub>2</sub>$ .

#### **Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)**

The LCA quantifies the various environmental impacts and consequences of products/ processes over their entire lifespan by assessing the possible environment burden.<sup>1,2</sup> The present study investigated the environmental footprints of the synthesized adsorbent (25% PEI@PSB) having higher capture performance among various studied materials, followed by its potential for  $CO<sub>2</sub>$  capture using (LCA) methodology based on ISO 14040/14044 framework.<sup>1-3</sup> The aim is to assess and provide context for produced PEI@PSB at a laboratory scale and extrapolate its carbon capture potential for a standard commercial scale approach.<sup>4</sup> Initially, the work focus on analysis of synthesised 25% PEI@PSB followed by its utilization of catalyst for carbon capture (CC), with 1 ton CC as the functional unit (FU). This work considered an ex-ante 'cradle-to-grave' scope approach that incorporates the complete product capture. The spatial scope depends on the synthesis of 25% PEI@PSB, while temporal scope is set to conduct a carbon capture potential to assess the environmental effects of 25% PEI@PSB for CC scale up. The second phase involves, designing a system boundary (from synthesis to final capture) and life cycle inventory (LCI). **Figure S19** illustrates the inputs (with two ratios; Case-A and Case B) and output flows for 25% PEI@PSB and CC system. The LCI comprises chemicals inputs, energy input, natural resources, and by-products for catalyst and CC (**Table S6**). The proxy LCI data (Step-1: 25% PEI@PSB synthesis) for chemicals, such as Pseudoboehmite, were obtained by substituting aluminium metal oxides instead of entirely eliminating the inputs to LCIs. A linear scaling up of the input material balance were performed using the lab scale experimental yields from 100 cycles for CC that were investigated. The energy inputs were determined by considering the process flows and specific heat of the material.5, <sup>6</sup> The LCI scenarios were assessed using SimaPro (v 9.6.0.1) software, and ecoinvent database (v 3.10) for background processes with 'cut-off' approach. The study utilized two life cycle impact assessment (LCIA) approaches, namely the ReCiPe 2016 end-point (H) having three sub categories and midpoint (H) (v 1.08) with 18 sub categories.<sup>7, 8</sup> Moreover, environmental impact deviations of energy, we examined two primary electricity sources: Non-renewable (NRE: Coal-Indian-Southern grid) and Renewable energy (RE: Solar-photovoltaic). The energy alternatives examined in this study offer a comparative analysis of the current grid and renewable alternatives, particularly in relation to emissions and energy consumption scale, which is an increasing issue.<sup>2, 9</sup> The  $CO<sub>2</sub>$  inputs

were obtained from the LCI database. Various methods for supplying  $CO<sub>2</sub>$ , includes  $CO<sub>2</sub>$  capture from flue gas (namely  $CO_2$  from fossil-fired power plants or industrial processes).<sup>9-11</sup>





Brønsted acid-base interaction

**Scheme S1.** Synthesis of PEI-PSB depicting the predominant Brønsted acid-base interaction between PEI and Brønsted acid sites in PSB



Lewis acid-base interaction

**Scheme S2.** Synthesis of PEI-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> depicting the predominant Lewis acid-base interaction between PEI and Lewis acid sites in  $\gamma$ −Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

# **Tables**

<b>Material</b>	<b>Adsorption</b> Temp. $(^{\circ}C)$	<b>Desorption</b> Temp. $(^{\circ}C)$	$CO2$ uptake (mmol/g)
10% PEI@PSB	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	1.6
20% PEI@PSB	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	3.4
25% PEI@PSB	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	4.9
30% PEI@PSB	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	4.7
40% PEI@PSB	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	3.7
20% ΡΕΙ $\omega$ γ-Αl <sub>2</sub> Ο <sub>3</sub>	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	2.3
25% ΡΕΙ $\omega$ γ-Αl <sub>2</sub> Ο <sub>3</sub>	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	3.2
30% PEI( $@$ γ-Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	3.0
25% PEI@ZSM-5	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	4.7
25% PEI@SBA-15	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	1.6

Table S1. Comparison of CO<sub>2</sub> adsorption performance of PEI-based sorbents

<b>Support</b>	Amine	Amine	<b>Adsorption</b>	Regeneration	<b>Type</b>	$CO2$ a	$CO2$ <sub>b</sub>	CO <sub>2</sub>	Ref.
	type	loading	Temp. $(^{\circ}C)$	Temp. $(^{\circ}C)$		uptake	uptake	uptake	
		$(\%)$				(mg/g)	(mg/g)	(mmol/g)	
<b>PSB</b>	<b>PEI</b>	25	75	200	<b>Static</b>	225	151	5.1	<b>Our work</b>
<b>PSB</b>	<b>PEI</b>	25	75	150	<b>Static</b>	216	211	4.9	<b>Our work</b>
$MCM-41$	PEI	50	75	75	Static	108	103	2.5	12
$MCM-41$	PEI	75	75		Static	133	101	3.0	$\overline{13}$
$MCM-41$	PEI	75	75		Static	246		5.6	14
$MCM-41$	PEI	55	75	$\overline{\phantom{a}}$	Static			4.7	$\overline{15}$
Si-MCM-41	PEI	75	75		Static	133	101	3.0	16
$SBA-15$	PEI	50	75	110	Static	174	166	4.0	17
Silica gel	PEI	30	40	130	Static	207	121	4.7	18
Resin	PEI	30	65	110	Static	176	158	4.0	19
Silica foam	PEI	80	75					5.8	20
$Al_2O_3$	PEI	40	90	120	Static	116	110	2.6	21
$Al_2O_3$	PEI	50	90	120	Static	125	124	2.8	21
$Al_2O_3$	PEI	20	75	75	<b>Static</b>	70	63	1.6	22
$Al_2O_3$	PEI	55	90	165	Static	134	112	3.0	$\overline{23}$
$Al_2O_3$	PEI	55	90	165	Static	132	93	3.0	23
$Al_2O_3$	PEI	$\overline{45}$	$\overline{75}$	75	Static	119	116	2.7	24
$Al_2O_3$	PEI	25	75	100	Static	50	44	1.1	25
$\gamma$ -Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	PEI	25	75	100	Static	43	35	$1.0\,$	26
$Al_2O_3$	PEI	19	35	100	Static	56	53	1.3	27
$Al_2O_3$	PEI	30	75	75	Static	74	68	1.7	28
SiO <sub>2</sub>	PEI	50	90	150	Static	101	13	2.3	29
SiO <sub>2</sub>	PEI	40	90	150	Static	134	25	3.0	30
SiO <sub>2</sub>	PEI	60	105	150	Static	116	38	2.6	31
SiO <sub>2</sub>	PEI	50	40	120	Static	128	48	2.9	32
SiO <sub>2</sub>	PEI	40	90	120	Static	125	124	2.8	21

**Table S2: Literature summary of some of the best PEI-based adsorbents for CO<sup>2</sup> capture**

<sup>a</sup> initial CO<sub>2</sub> uptake of adsorbent

 $^{\rm b}$  final CO<sub>2</sub> uptake after regeneration cycles

<b>Materials</b>	<b>BET Surface Area</b>	<b>BJH</b> Pore	<b>Pore Volume</b> $(cm3g-1)$	
	$(m^2g^{-1})^a$	Distribution $(nm)^b$		
<b>PSB</b>	228.2	6.9	0.3618	
20% PEI@PSB	81.9	6.1	0.1839	
25% PEI@PSB	49.8	6.8	0.1253	
30% PEI@PSB	24.4	8.4	0.0788	
40% PEI@PSB	N/A	N/A	N/A	
$\gamma$ -Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	193.9	9.2	0.4613	
25% PEI@γ-Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	70.3	7.9	0.1982	
$ZSM-5$	389.8	1.7	0.2814	
$SBA-15$	851.2	7.3	0.8773	

**Table S3.** Summary of N<sub>2</sub> physisorption measurements.

 $a =$  From BET

b = Pore size distribution by BJH method

c = Pore size distribution by MP-plot method











## **Table S6. Inventory for the adsorbent synthesis and carbon capture for the studies 25% PEI@PSB for Case-A and Case-B.**



### **Table S7. Damage categories for the 25% PEI@PSB in Case-A and Case-B.**





### **Table S9. Damage categories for the carbon capture with 25% PEI@PSB in Case-A and Case-B: renewable energy (RE) and non-renewable energy (NRE) grid.**





**Table S10. LCA of impact categories for the carbon capture with 25% PEI@PSB in Case-A and Case-B: renewable energy (RE) and non-renewable energy (NRE) grid.**

Table S11. Summary of CO<sub>2</sub> uptake experiments in dynamic mode

<b>Materials</b>	<b>Breakthrough</b> <b>Time</b> (seconds)	<b>Uptake till Breakthrough</b> Point qь
20% ΡΕΙ $@$ γ-Αl <sub>2</sub> Ο <sub>3</sub>	19.5	1.63 ml of $CO_2/g_{\text{sort}}$ 3.19 mg of $CO_2/g_{\text{sorbent}}$
25% PEI@γ-Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	33.5	2.79 ml of $CO2/gsort$ 5.47 mg of $CO_2/g_{\text{sortbent}}$
30% PEI( $@$ γ-Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	23.5	1.96 ml of $CO_2/g_{\text{sort}}$ 3.84 mg of $CO_2/g_{\text{sorbent}}$
20% PEI@PSB	25.0	2.08 ml of $CO_2/g_{\text{sort}}$ 4.08 mg of $CO_2/g_{\text{sorbent}}$
$25%$ PEI@PSB	34.5	2.88 ml of $CO_2/g_{\text{sort}}$ 5.64 mg of CO <sub>2</sub> /g <sub>sorbent</sub>
30% PEI@PSB	26.0	2.17 ml of $CO_2/g_{\text{sort}}$ 4.25 mg of $CO_2/g_{\text{sortbent}}$

<b>Material</b>	<b>Adsorption</b> Temp. $(^{\circ}C)$	<b>Desorption</b> Temp. $(^{\circ}C)$	$CO2$ uptake (µmol/g)
$\gamma$ -Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	873.13
25% PEI@ $\gamma$ -Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	5343.3
<b>PSB</b>	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	919.81
25% PEI@PSB	$75^{\circ}$ C	$150^{\circ}$ C	3916.7

**Table S12.** Comparison of CO<sub>2</sub> adsorption performance at humid conditions

# **Figures**



**Figure S1.** FTIR spectra of a) unmodified PSB, fresh 20% PEI@PSB and spent 20% PEI@PSB, b) unmodified PSB, fresh 25% PEI@PSB and spent 25% PEI@PSB, c) unmodified PSB, fresh 30% PEI@PSB and spent 30% PEI@PSB.



**Figure S2.** SEM image of (a) 20% PEI@PSB and elemental mapping, (b) nitrogen, (c) carbon, and (d) oxygen.



**Figure S3.** SEM image of (a) 25% PEI@PSB and elemental mapping, (b) nitrogen, (c) carbon, and (d) oxygen.



**Figure S4.** SEM image of (a) 30% PEI@PSB and elemental mapping, (b) nitrogen, (c) carbon, and (d) oxygen.



**Figure S5.** SEM image of (a) 20% PEI@γ-Al2O<sup>3</sup> and elemental mapping, (b) nitrogen, (c) carbon, and (d) oxygen.



**Figure S6.** SEM image of (a) 25% PEI@γ-Al2O<sup>3</sup> and elemental mapping, (b) nitrogen, (c) carbon, and (d) oxygen.



**Figure S7.** SEM image of (a) 30% PEI@γ-Al2O<sup>3</sup> and elemental mapping, (b) nitrogen, (c) carbon, and (d) oxygen.



**Figure S8.** SEM image of (a) 25% PEI@ZSM-5 and elemental mapping, (b) nitrogen, (c) carbon, and (d) oxygen.



**Figure S9.** SEM image of (a) 25% PEI@SBA-15 and elemental mapping, (b) nitrogen, (c) carbon, and (d) oxygen.



**Figure S10.** (a) N<sub>2</sub> physisorption isotherms for different loading of PEI over pseudoboehmite, and (b)  $N_2$  physisorption isotherm comparison for as synthesized  $\gamma$ -Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> from pseudoboehmite.



**Figure S11.** CO<sub>2</sub> adsorption isotherms for 25% PEI@PSB at two different temperatures; 273 K (0 °C) and 298 K (25 °C).



**Figure S12.** CO<sub>2</sub> adsorption isotherms for 25% PEI@PSB at two different temperatures, fitted with Freundlich-Langmuir equation (inset: parameters for non-linear curve fitting).



**Figure S13.** Isosteric heat of  $CO<sub>2</sub>$  adsorption over 25% PEI@PSB adsorbent based on Freundlich-Langmuir fitting.



**Figure S14.** Pyridine-IR comparison of PSB and gamma alumina.



**Figure S15. a)** Comparison of PSB and 25% PEI@PSB, b) Comparison of 25% PEI@PSB and 25% PEI@GA



**Figure S16.** Pyridine IR comparison of SBA-15 and ZSM-5.



**Figure S17.** a) and b) Nitrogen adsorption desorption isotherms of ZSM-5 and SBA-15, c) and d) pore size distributions of ZSM-5 and SBA-15



Figure S18. Comparison of CO<sub>2</sub>-TPD profile of 25% PEI@SBA-15 with 25% PEI@ZSM-5



**Figure S19.** Comparison of XRD pattern of PEI@PSB and PEI@Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> with unmodified and spent materials.



**Figure S20.** Comparison of blank TPD with CO<sup>2</sup> TPD of 25% PEI@PSB.



**Figure S21**. a) and b) temperature dependant in-situ IR analysis of 25% PEI@PSB.

### **System boundary**



**Figure S22.** System boundary for PEI@PSB adsorbent synthesis, and 1 ton carbon capture.



**Figure S23.** Sankey representation of carbon dioxide emissions for 1 ton carbon capture: (a) Case-A in NRE condition; (b) Case-B in NRE condition; (c) Case-A in RE condition; and (d) Case-B in RE condition.



**Figure S24**. Dynamic breakthrough curve for  $CO_2$  uptake experiment performed with 5000 ppm  $CO_2$  in air. (a) 20% PEI γ-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (b) 25% PEI γ-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (c) 30% PEI γ-Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (d) 20% PEI@PSB (e) 25% PEI@PSB and (f) 30% PEI@PSB.

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