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# **Supporting Information**

# Metal- and Base-Free Synthesis of Imidazo[1,2-a]pyridines through Elemental Sulfur-Initiated Oxidative Annulation of 2-Aminopyridines and Aldehydes

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## 1. General information

All reactions were carried out under air atmosphere unless otherwise noted. Column chromatography was performed using aluminum oxide (neutral) (100-200 mesh). <sup>1</sup>H NMR and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra were recorded on Bruker-AV (400 and 100 MHz, respectively) instrument internally referenced to tetramethylsilane (TMS) or chloroform signals. Mass spectra were measured on Agilent 5975 GC-MS instrument (EI). High-resolution mass spectra were recorded at the Institute of Chemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences. The structures of known compounds were further corroborated by comparing their <sup>1</sup>H NMR, <sup>13</sup>C NMR data and MS data with those of literature. All reagents were obtained from commercial suppliers and used without further purification.

## 2. General procedure for the synthesis of imidazo[1,2-a]pyridines

**3a for example:** Pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.5 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-phenylacetaldehyde (**2a**, 46.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol) were added to a 10 mL reaction vessel. Cyclohexane (0.2 mL) and DMSO (0.4 mL) were then added by syringe. The sealed reaction vessel under air atmosphere was stirred at 120 °C for 1 h. After cooling to room temperature, the reaction was diluted with ethyl acetate (5 mL) and washed with saturated salt water. The organic layer was separated, and the aqueous layer was extracted with ethyl acetate for three times. The combined organic layer was dried over sodium sulfate, and the volatiles were removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:2, R<sub>f</sub> = 0.60) to yield the desired product **3a** as brown solid (33.4 mg, 86% yield), mp 95-97 °C.

#### 3. Procedure for gram-scale reactions

Pyridin-2-amine (1a, 0.96 g, 10 mmol), aldehyde (2, 20 mmol) and sulfur powder (0.64 g, 20 mmol) were added to a round bottomed flask (50 mL). To the reaction vessel cyclohexane (3.0 mL) and DMSO (6.0 mL) were added by measuring cylinder. The reaction mixture was stirred at 120  $^{\circ}$ C under air conditions for 1 h. After cooling to room temperature, the reaction was diluted with ethyl acetate (15 mL) and washed with saturated salt water. The organic layer was separated and the aqueous layer was extracted with ethyl acetate for three times. The combined organic layer was dried over sodium sulfate and the volatiles were removed under reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:2) to yield the desired product.



### 4. Characterization data of products

3-Phenylimidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3a, CAS: 92961-15-4)<sup>[1]</sup>



<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.35 (d, J = 6.6 Hz, 1H), 7.70-7.65 (m, 2H), 7.58-7.53 (m, 4H), 7.43 (t, J = 6.1 Hz, 1H), 7.21 (t, J = 6.1 Hz, 1H), 6.82 (t, J = 6.3 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  145.8, 132.1, 128.98, 128.96, 127.9, 127.7, 125.5, 124.0, 123.1, 117.9, 112.3.

### 8-Methyl-3-phenylimidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3b)<sup>[2]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with 3-methylpyridin-2-amine (**1b**, 22.0 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-phenylacetaldehyde (**2a**, 46.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3b** as brown oily liquid (39.9 mg, 96% yield. R<sub>f</sub> = 0.60 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.21 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.69 (s, 1H), 7.56-7.48 (m, 4H), 7.40 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 7.00 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 1H), 6.72 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 2.65 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  146.4, 131.7, 129.5, 129.1, 128.2, 128.1, 127.9, 126.1, 123.1, 121.2, 112.6,17.0.

#### 3-Phenyl-8-(trifluoromethyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine (3c)



The reaction was conducted with 3-(trifluoromethyl)pyridin-2-amine (1c, 32.4 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-phenylacetaldehyde (2a, 46.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product 3c as brown solid (21.5 mg, 41% yield), mp 82-83 °C. R<sub>f</sub> = 0.60 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.47 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.82 (s, 1H), 7.58-7.54 (m, 5H), 7.49-7.46 (m, 1H), 6.90 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  141.2, 133.4, 129.4, 128.9, 128.4, 128.3, 126.7, 126.6, 122.9 (q, J = 270 Hz), 122.8 (q, J = 4 Hz), 119.7 (q, J =33 Hz), 110.9; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>10</sub>F<sub>3</sub>N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 263.07906, found 263.07922.

#### 8-Iodo-3-phenylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridine (3d)



The reaction was conducted with 3-iodopyridin-2-amine (1d, 44.0 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-phenylacetaldehyde (2a, 46.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product 3d as white solid (48.6 mg, 76% yield), mp 123-124 °C. R<sub>f</sub> = 0.60 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.32 (dd, J = 6.9 Hz, 1.0 Hz, 1H), 7.77 (s, 1H), 7.71 (dd, J = 7.1 Hz, 1.0 Hz, 1H), 7.56-7.50 (m, 4H), 7.47-7.42 (m, 1H), 6.58 (s, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  145.2, 133.6, 132.7, 129.3, 128.9, 128.6, 128.2, 127.7, 123.6, 113.3, 84.9; HRMS calcd. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>10</sub>IN<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 320.98832, found 320.98853.

#### 7-Methyl-3-phenylimidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3e, CAS: 882187-78-2)<sup>[2]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with 4-methylpyridin-2-amine (1e, 21.6 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-phenylacetaldehyde (2a, 46.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product 3e as brown oily liquid (31.2 mg, 75% yield). R<sub>f</sub> = 0.55 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.23 (d, J = 7.1 Hz, 1H), 7.62 (s, 1H), 7.56-7.49 (m, 4H), 7.44-7.38 (m, 2H), 6.65 (dd, J = 7.1 Hz, 1.5 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  146.5, 135.3, 132.0, 129.4, 129.2, 128.0, 127.9, 125.2, 122.6, 116.5, 115.2, 21.2.

#### 3-Phenylimidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine-7-carbonitrile (3f)



The reaction was conducted with 2-aminoisonicotinonitrile (**1f**, 24.0 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-phenylacetaldehyde (**2a**, 46.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3f** as brown solid (35.0 mg, 80% yield), mp 123-125 °C. R<sub>f</sub> = 0.45 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.40 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 8.12 (s, 1H), 7.92 (s, 1H), 7.60-7.50 (m, 5H), 6.98 (dd, J = 7.2 Hz, 1.5 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  145.5, 136.4, 132.1, 128.8, 128.2, 126.9, 123.9, 123.2, 122.5, 117.7, 112.2, 30.2; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>10</sub>N<sub>3</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 220.08692, found 220.08652.

6-Methyl-3-phenylimidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3g, CAS: 1338248-70-6)<sup>[2]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with 5-methylpyridin-2-amine (**1g**, 21.6 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-phenylacetaldehyde (**2a**, 46.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3g** as brown oily liquid (32.4 mg, 78% yield). R<sub>f</sub> = 0.55 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.11 (s, 1H), 7.65 (s, 1H), 7.61 (d, J = 9.2 Hz, 1H), 7.57-7.50 (m, 4H), 7.44-7.40 (m, 1H), 7.07 (dd, J = 9.2 Hz, 1.4 Hz, 1H), 2.32 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  145.1, 132.0, 129.4, 129.2, 128.1, 127.6, 125.4, 122.3, 120.9, 117.4, 18.4. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>13</sub>N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 209.10732, found 209.10722.

#### Methyl 3-phenylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridine-6-carboxylate (3h, CAS:1338248-82-0)<sup>[2]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with methyl 6-aminonicotinate (**1h**, 30.4 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-phenylacetaldehyde (**2a**, 46.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3h** as brown solid (30.2 mg, 60% yield), mp 84-86 °C. R<sub>f</sub> = 0.35 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.47 (s, 1H), 8.38 (d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 7.88 (s, 1H), 7.58-7.54 (m, 4H), 7.49-7.45 (m, 2H), 3.99 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  165.6, 144.9, 134.7, 129.4, 128.8, 128.4, 128.1, 127.3, 125.7, 122.9, 120.9, 111.9, 52.5. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>15</sub>H<sub>13</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 253.09715, found 253.09770.

5-Methyl-3-phenylimidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3i, CAS: 1338248-81-9)<sup>[2]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with 6-methylpyridin-2-amine (1i, 21.6 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-phenylacetaldehyde (2a, 46.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product 3i as yellow solid (25.0 mg, 60% yield), mp 63-65 °C. R<sub>f</sub> = 0.50 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  7.60 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (s, 1H), 7.46-7.38 (m, 5H), 7.14-7.10 (m, 1H), 6.51 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 2.17 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  146.8, 136.4, 134.0, 131.8, 131.6, 128.4, 127.4, 126.2, 124.5, 115.9, 113.4, 21.7.

#### 5-(Benzyloxy)-3-phenylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridine (3j)



The reaction was conducted with 6-(benzyloxy)pyridin-2-amine (**1j**, 40.0 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-phenylacetaldehyde (**2a**, 46.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3j** as yellow solid (55.8 mg, 93% yield), mp 108-110 °C. R<sub>f</sub> = 0.60 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  7.95 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 7.66 (s, 1H), 7.56-7.48 (m, 6H), 7.42-7.29 (m, 4H), 6.65 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.51 (d, J = 7.5 Hz, 1H), 5.35 (s, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  148.2, 140.5, 136.1, 131.4, 129.3, 129.1, 128.5, 128.1, 128.1, 128.0, 127.3, 126.7, 116.5, 112.4, 102.6, 70.6. HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>17</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 301.13354, found 301.13394.

3-(o-Tolyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine (3k)<sup>[3]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-(o-tolyl)acetaldehyde (**2b**, 53.6 mg, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3k** as faint yellow oily liquid (35.4 mg, 85% yield).  $R_f = 0.60$  (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm) δ 7.77 (d, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.70 (d, *J* = 9.1 Hz, 1H), 7.62 (s, 1H), 7.39-7.32 (m, 4H), 7.27- 7.19 (m, 1H), 6.78 (t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 2.17 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm) δ 145.4, 138.2, 132.7, 131.1, 130.7, 129.1, 128.1, 126.2, 124.6, 124.0, 123.6, 117.9, 112.2, 19.7.

#### 3-(2-Bromophenyl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine (3l)



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-(2-bromophenyl)acetaldehyde (**2c**, 79.2 mg, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3I** as yellow oily liquid (37.1 mg, 67% yield).  $R_f = 0.55$  (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  7.82 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 7.78-7.72 (m, 3H), 7.47-7.46 (m, 2H), 7.39-7.34 (m, 1H), 7.27 (t, *J* = 7.9 Hz, 1H), 6.84 (t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  145.5, 133.4, 133.2, 133.1, 130.6, 130.1, 127.8, 125.1, 124.6, 124.4, 124.3, 117.9, 112.3; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>10</sub>BrN<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 273.00219, found 273.00186.

#### 3-(3-Fluorophenyl)imidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3m, CAS: 1560900-40-4)<sup>[4]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 3-methylstyrene (**2d**, 55.2 mg, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3m** as yellow oily liquid (12.7 mg, 30% yield).  $R_f = 0.60$  (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.37 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.73- 7.70 (m, 2H), 7.53-7.47 (m, 1H), 7.37 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 1H), 7.30-7.23 (m, 2H), 7.12 (t, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 6.87 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  163.2 (d, J = 247 Hz), 146.3, 132.9, 131.3 (d, J = 8 Hz), 130.9 (d, J = 9 Hz), 124.67, 124.56, 123.5 (d, J = 3 Hz), 123.3, 118.4, 115.1(d, J = 21 Hz), 114.7 (d, J = 22 Hz), 112.9; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>10</sub>FN<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 213.08225, found 213.08157.

#### 3-(3-Chlorophenyl)imidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3n, CAS: 1361328-90-6)<sup>[5]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-(3-chlorophenyl)acetaldehyde (**2e**, 61.6 mg, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3n** as yellow oily liquid (27.8 mg, 61% yield).  $R_f = 0.5$  (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.34 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.73-7.71 (m, 2H), 7.56 (s, 1H), 7.47-7.46 (m, 2H), 7.41-7.40 (m, 1H), 7.27-7.24 (m, 1H), 6.88 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  146.2, 135.2, 132.7, 131.0, 130.5, 128.3, 127.8, 126.0, 124.8, 124.3, 123.2, 118.3, 113.0; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>10</sub>ClN<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 229.05270, found 229.05258.

3-(p-Tolyl)imidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (30, CAS: 1338248-67-1)<sup>[1]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-(p-tolyl)acetaldehyde (**2f**, 53.6 mg, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3o** as yellow oily liquid (30.8 mg, 74% yield).  $R_f = 0.60$  (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm) δ 8.32 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.71-7.67 (m, 2H), 7.46 (d, J = 7.4 Hz, 2H), 7.33 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 7.23-7.19 (m, 1H), 6.82 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 2.44 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm) δ 145.8, 138.3, 131.8, 130.0, 128.1, 126.2, 125.8, 124.3, 123.4, 118.1, 112.6, 21.3.

#### 3-(4-Chlorophenyl)imidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3p)<sup>[6]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-(4-chlorophenyl)acetaldehyde (**2g**, 71.5 mg, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3p** as yellow solid (37.8 mg, 83% yield), mp 94-96 °C.  $R_f = 0.60$  (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.29 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 7.73-7.70 (m, 2H), 7.50 (s, 4H), 7.27-7.23(m, 1H), 6.86 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  145.9, 134.2, 131.8, 129.5, 129.3, 127.4, 125.0, 124.7, 123.2, 118.1, 113.1; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>10</sub>ClN<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 229.05270, found 229.05324.

#### 3-(4-Bromophenyl)imidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3q, CAS: 1338248-68-2)<sup>[1]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-(4-bromophenyl)acetaldehyde (**2h**, 79.2 mg, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3q** as yellowish solid (43.5 mg, 80% yield), mp 95-97 °C.  $R_f = 0.60$  (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm) δ 8.30 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.80 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 7.74 (s, 1H), 7.67 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.44 (d, J = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.32-7.27 (m, 1H), 6.90 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm) δ 145.6, 140.9, 132.5, 131.3, 129.6, 125.4, 124.6, 123.2, 122.5, 118.0, 113.4.

#### 3-(4-Methoxyphenyl)imidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3r, CAS: 1338248-76-2)<sup>[1]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 2-(4-methoxyphenyl)acetaldehyde (**2i**, 60.0 mg, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3r** as yellowish solid (35.8 mg, 80% yield), mp 110-112 °C.  $R_f = 0.40$  (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.27 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.68 (d, J = 9.1 Hz, 1H), 7.64 (s, 1H), 7.48 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.21-7.18 (m, 1H), 7.06 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 6.81 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 3.89 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  159.7, 145.6, 131.7, 129.7, 125.5, 124.1, 123.3, 121.4, 118.1, 114.7, 112.5, 55.4.

### 3-Benzylimidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3s)<sup>[7]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 3-phenylpropanal (**2j**, 55.4  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3s** as brown solid (39.9 mg, 96% yield), mp 110-112 °C. R<sub>f</sub> = 0.70 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  7.77 (d, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.68 (d, *J* = 9.1 Hz, 1H), 7.49 (s, 1H), 7.32-7.25 (m, 3H), 7.19-7.15 (m, 3H), 6.74 (t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 4.25 (s, 2H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  145.3, 136.3, 131.6, 128.8, 128.3, 127.0, 124.2, 123.3, 122.6, 117.6, 112.4, 30.2; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>13</sub>N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 209.10732, found 209.10799

#### 3-Methylimidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3t)<sup>[8]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (1a, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), propionaldehyde (2k, 31.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product 3t as brown oily liquid (25.6 mg, 97% yield). R<sub>f</sub> = 0.65 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  7.88 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.62 (d, J = 9.1 Hz, 1H), 7.42 (s, 1H), 7.18-7.14 (m, 1H), 6.84 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 2.48 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  145.1, 131.2, 123.1, 122.7, 119.8, 117.7, 112.0, 9.0; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>8</sub>H<sub>9</sub>N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 133.07602, found 133.07640.

#### 3-((Methylthio)methyl)imidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3u)



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (1a, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol),

3-(methylthio)propanal (21, 41.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product 3u as brown solid (28.5 mg, 80% yield), mp 58-60 °C. R<sub>f</sub> = 0.25 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.13 (dd, J = 6.9 Hz, 1.0 Hz, 1H), 7.63 (dd, J = 9.1 Hz, 1.0 Hz, 1H), 7.53 (s, 1H), 7.23-7.18 (m, 1H), 6.85 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 3.99 (s, 2H), 1.94 (s, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  146.1, 133.1, 123.9, 123.8, 118.5, 117.7, 111.9, 26.7, 14.5; HRMS calcd. for C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>11</sub>N<sub>2</sub>S [M+H]<sup>+</sup> 179.06375, found 179.06369.

#### 3-Hexylimidazo[1,2-a]pyridine (3v)

Me



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (1a, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), octanal (2m, 64.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product 3v as yellow oily liquid (32.7 mg, 81% yield). R<sub>f</sub> = 0.55 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  7.92 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 7.66 (d, J = 9.1 Hz, 1H), 7.42 (s, 1H), 7.19-7.15 (m, 1H), 6.84 (t, J = 6.7 Hz, 1H), 2.82 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 1.79-1.75 (m, 2H), 1.46-1.42 (m, 2H), 1.34-1.32 (m, 4H), 0.90 (t, J = 6.5 Hz, 3H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  144.9, 130.0, 124.6, 123.5, 122.9, 117.7, 112.1, 31.5, 29.1, 26.8, 23.8, 22.5, 14.0; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>19</sub>N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 203.15428, found 203.15417.

#### 3-Isopropylimidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3w, CAS: 78132-60-2)<sup>[9]</sup>



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (1a, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 3-methylbutanal (2n, 43.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product 3w as

brown oily liquid (31.0 mg, 97% yield).  $R_f = 0.50$  (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  7.93 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.61 (d, J = 9.1 Hz, 1H), 7.41 (s, 1H), 7.14-7.10 (m, 1H), 6.81-6.78 (m, 1H), 3.20-3.13 (m, 1H), 1.38 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 6H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  145.2, 130.3, 128.5, 122.9, 122.9, 117.8, 111.7, 23.9, 20.6; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>13</sub>N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 161.10732, found 161.10686.

#### 3-(*tert*-Butyl)imidazo[1,2-*a*]pyridine (3x)



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 3,3-dimethylbutanal (**2o**, 51.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3x** as yellowish solid (33.4 mg, 96% yield), mp 85-86 °C. R<sub>f</sub> = 0.65 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.24 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 1H), 7.64 (d, *J* = 9.1 Hz, 1H), 7.39 (s, 1H), 7.16-7.12 (m, 1H), 6.79 (t, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 1.49 (s, 9H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  146.2, 132.7, 129.1, 125.3, 122.8, 118.2, 111.5, 30.8, 28.0; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>11</sub>H<sub>15</sub>N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 175.12297, found 175.12238

#### 3-(4,4-Dimethylpentan-2-yl)imidazo[1,2-a]pyridine (3y)



The reaction was conducted with pyridin-2-amine (**1a**, 19.8 mg, 0.2 mmol), 3,5,5-trimethylhexanal (**2p**, 73.0  $\mu$ L, 0.4 mmol) and sulfur powder (12.8 mg, 0.4 mmol). The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (petroleum ether/EtOAc = 1:1) to yield the desired product **3y** as yellowish solid (42.3 mg, 98% yield), mp 95-96 °C. R<sub>f</sub> = 0.60 (1:2 petroleum ether/EtOAc).

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  8.00 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 1H), 7.65 (d, J = 9.1 Hz, 1H), 7.43 (s, 1H), 7.16 (t, J = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 6.84 (t, J = 6.7 Hz, 1H), 3.19-3.16 (m, 1H), 1.91 (dd, J = 14.1 Hz, 6.4 Hz, 1H), 1.56 (dd, J = 14.1 Hz, 5.4 Hz, 1H), 1.37 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 3H), 0.90 (s, 9H); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>, ppm)  $\delta$  144.9, 130.8, 129.2, 123.2, 123.0, 118.0, 112.0, 49.0, 31.1, 29.9, 25.9, 22.0; HRMS (ESI) m/z calcd for C<sub>14</sub>H<sub>21</sub>N<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> (M+H)<sup>+</sup> 217.16993, found 217.16982.

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# 6. Copies of <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra of all products



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