Supporting Information for:

Base mediated cascade amidination/alkylation of amines by alcohols

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1. General

Experimental: All reactions and manipulations with air sensitive compounds being present were performed under dry argon (Ar 5.0) or nitrogen (N₂ 5.0), using Schlenk and glove box techniques. Non-halogenated solvents were dried over sodium benzophenone, 2-methyltetrahydrofuran (2-Me-THF) was dried over calcium hydride, and halogenated solvents were dried over P2O5. Deuterated solvents were bought from Cambridge Isotope Laboratories, distilled accordingly, and stored over molecular sieves (3 Å). Other chemicals were purchased from commercial vendors and used without further purification. NMR spectra were collected on a Varian INOVA 300 and 400 MHz spectrometer. Chemical shifts (δ) are reported in ppm relative to residual solvent signal. Coupling constants (J) are given in Hz (coupling patterns: s: singlet, s br: broad singlet, d: doublet, t: triplet, q: quartet, m: multiplet). GC analyses were carried out using an Agilent Technologies 6890N system equipped with a Machinery-Nagel (MN) Optima 5 HT column (30 m, 320 µm, 0.25 µm) or an Agilent Technologies 6850 system equipped with a MN Optima 17 column (30 m, 320 µm, 0.25 µm). GC/MS analyses were carried out on an Agilent 7890A/MSD 5975C system equipped with a HP-5MS column (30 m, 320 µm, 0.25 µm). High resolution mass spectra (HRMS) were recorded on Bruker MicroTOF-QII mass (ESI). MN silica gel 60 (0.040 - 0.063 mm particle size) was used for flash column chromatography.

2. Screening of reaction parameters

Closed system:

$$R \longrightarrow OH + H_2 N - R^1 \xrightarrow{t-BuOK} R \longrightarrow R^1 \xrightarrow{H} R^1$$

Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried pressure tube (38 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, base, alcohol (A1), amine (B1), nitrile, and solvent. Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (design temperature). After design time the reaction was cooled, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 15 mL). The combined organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. A small aliquot of the organic phase was analyzed by GC or GC-MS to monitor product formation. Purification of the remainder by column chromatography on silica gel gave the corresponding products C1 (pentane/ethyl ether = 15/1 - 5/1) in the reported yield.

Entry	Parameter
Table S1	The difference of base screening
Table S2	The difference of solvent screening
Table S3	Screening the loading of <i>t</i> -BuOK
Table S4	Reaction temperature screening
Table S5	The ratio of A1 and B1 screening
Table S6	Reaction system screening

		Base Ph
	$Ph^{2} OH + P_{2}N - PH$	PhCN H
	A1 B1	
Entry	Base (1.6 equiv)	<u> </u>
1	$L_{12}CO_3$	0
2	LiOH	0
3	t-BuOLi	0
4	LiHMDS	0
5	LDA	0
6	Na ₂ CO ₃	0
7	NaOH	0
8	t-BuONa	15
9	NaHMDS	0
10	NaHCO ₃	0
11	NaH	<5
12	NaNH ₂	<5
13	NaOAc	0
14	K_2CO_3	0
15	KHCO3	0
16	K ₃ PO ₄	0
17	K ₂ HPO ₄	0
18	КОН	0
19	t-BuOK	95
20	KHMDS	86
21	KH	73
22	Cs ₂ CO ₃	0
23	CsOH	0
24	<i>t</i> -BuOCs	<5
25	Et ₃ N	0
26	Pyridine	0
27	DBU	0
28	TMEDA	0
29	DABCO	0
30	DMAP	0
31	-	0

Table S1: The difference of base screening ^{*a*}

^{*a*} Reaction conditions: *base* (0.8 mmol), **A1** (1.0 mmol, 104 μ L), **B1** (0.6 mmol, 55 μ L), PhCN (0.5 mmol, 51 μ L), 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL), 120 °C (extern temperature), N₂, 15 h. Yield of **C1** determined by GC-analysis using *n*-dodecane (50 μ L) as internal standard.

	P_{h} + $H_{h}N-P_{h}$	t-BuOK
	A1 B1	PhCN H
Entry	Solvent (2 mL)	C1 (%)
1	xylene	49
2	toluene	64
3	benzene	56
4	anisole	82
5	1,4-dioxane	95
6	THF	36
7	2-THF	74
8	diglyme	58
9	CH ₃ OH	0
10	CH ₃ CH ₂ OH	0
11	<i>i</i> -PrOH	0
12	t-BuOH	<5
13	t-AmOH	7
14	DCM	0
15	DCE	0
16	CHCl ₃	0
17	CH ₃ NO ₂	0
18	NMP	32
19	DMSO	33
20	DMF	7
21	DMAc	6
22	CH ₃ CO ₂ CH ₂ CH ₃	16

Table S2: The difference of solvent screening ^{*a*}

^{*a*} Reaction conditions: *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), A1 (1.0 mmol, 104 μ L), B1 (0.6 mmol, 55 μ L), PhCN (0.5 mmol, 51 μ L), solvent (2.0 mL), 120 °C (extern temperature), N₂, 15 h. Yield of C1 determined by GC-analysis using *n*-dodecane (50 μ L) as internal standard.

	$P_{\rm h}$ + $H_{\rm h}N$ -Ph	t-BuOK
	A1 B1	PhCN H C1
Entry	t-BuOK (mmol)	C1 (%)
1	0	0
2	0.1	0
3	0.2	<5
4	0.4	34
5	0.5	59
6	0.6	72
7	0.7	91
8	0.8	95
9	0.9	94
10	1.0	95
11	1.2	94
12	1.4	95
13	1.6	91
14	1.8	89
15	2.0	85

Table S3: Screening the loading of *t*-BuOK ^{*a*}

^{*a*} Reaction conditions: *t*-BuOK (x mmol), A1 (1.0 mmol, 104 μ L), B1 (0.6 mmol, 55 μ L), PhCN (0.5 mmol, 51 μ L), 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL), 120 °C (extern temperature), N₂, 15 h. Yield of C1 determined by GC-analysis using *n*-dodecane (50 μ L) as internal standard.

	H-N-Ph -	<i>t-</i> BuOK	Ph
	P1	PhCN	
Entry	Т [°С]		<u> </u>
1	RT		0
2	40		0
3	60		0
4	80		21
5	100		52
6	120		95
7	130		94
8^b	140		88
9^b	150		62
10^{b}	160		41
11^{b}	180		<5

Table S4: Reaction temperature screening^{*a*}

^{*a*} Reaction conditions: *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), A1 (1.0 mmol, 104 μ L), B1 (0.6 mmol, 55 μ L), PhCN (0.5 mmol, 51 μ L), 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL), T (extern temperature), N₂, 15 h. Yield of C1 determined by GC-analysis using *n*-dodecane (50 μ L) as internal standard. ^{*b*} Reactions carried out in the autoclave.

		H.N-Dh _	t-BuOK	Ph
	Ph´ OH T A1	B1	PhCN C	H 1
Entry	A1 (mmol)	B1 (mmol)	PhCN (mmol)	C1 (%)
1	0.5	0.6	0.5	76
2	0.6	0.6	0.5	88
3	0.7	0.6	0.5	90
4	0.8	0.6	0.5	90
5	0.9	0.6	0.5	91
6	1.0	0.6	0.5	95
7	1.0	0.5	0.5	69
8	1.0	0.55	0.5	90
9	1.0	0.75	0.5	95
10	1.0	0.5	0	0
11	1.0	0.5	0.1	10
12	1.0	0.5	0.25	39
13	1.0	0.5	0.75	90
14	1.0	0.5	0.8	96
15	1.0	0.5	0.85	95
16	1.0	0.5	0.9	96
17	1.0	0.5	1.0	96
18	0.5	1.0	0.5	71
19	0.5	1.0	0.75	71
20	0.5	1.0	1.0	73

Table S5: The ratio of A1 and B1 screening a

^{*a*} Reaction conditions: *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), A1 (x mmol), B1 (x mmol), PhCN (x mmol), 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL), 120 °C (extern temperature), N₂, 15 h. Yield of C1 determined by GC-analysis using *n*-dodecane (50 μ L) as internal standard.

Table S6: Reaction system screening^{*a*}

Ph	`OH + H₂N−Ph A1 B1	t-BuOK ───────────────────────────── PhCN	∩∕N ^{Ph} H C1
Entry	System		C1 (%)
1	Seal tube	N_2	96
2	Seal tube	Ar	95
3	Seal tube	air	83
4	Seal tube	O ₂	<5
5	Open-reflux	N_2	91
6	Open-reflux	Ar	90
7	Open-reflux	air	81
8	Open-reflux	O_2	<5

^{*a*} Reaction conditions: *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), A1 (1.0 mmol), B1 (0.5 mmol), PhCN (0.8 mmol), 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL), 120 °C (extern temperature), N₂, 15 h. Yield of C1 determined by GC-analysis using *n*-dodecane (50 μ L) as internal standard.

3. General procedure for the *N*-alkylation reaction

Closed system:

 $R^{1} \sim OH + H_{2}N - R^{2} \xrightarrow{t-BuOK} R^{1} \sim R^{2}$ **A B C**

Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried pressure tube (38 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol, 90 mg), alcohols A (1.0 mmol), amines **B** (0.5 mmol), nitriles **D** (0.8 mmol), toluene (2.0 mL). The seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the r`eaction was cooled, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 15 mL). The combined organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. A small aliquot of the organic phase was analyzed by GC or GC-MS to monitor product formation. Purification of the remainder by column chromatography on silica gel gave the corresponding products **C** (pentane/ethyl ether = 15/1 - 5/1) in the reported yield, respectively.

4. Characterization data

N-benzylaniline (C1) : The title compound was prepared according to the general



procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the light yellow oil 83 mg, 91% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.40 – 7.31 (m,

5H), 7.21 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 6.76 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.67 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 4.36 (s, 2H), 4.06 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 148.1, 139.4, 129.2, 128.6, 127.5, 127.2, 117.5, 112.8, 48.3 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₃H₁₄N [M+H]: 184.1126, found: 184.1129.

N-(4-chlorobenzyl)aniline (C2): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give as the light yellow oil 89 mg, 82% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz,

23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.35 (d, *J* = 3.8 Hz, 4H), 7.27 – 7.21 (m, 2H), 6.82 – 6.77 (m, 1H), 6.68 – 6.65 (m, 2H), 4.35 (s, 2H), 4.09 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 147.7, 137.9, 132.7, 129.2, 128.7, 128.6, 117.7, 112.8, 47.5 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₃H₁₃ClN [M+H]: 218.0737, found: 218.0738.

N-(4-bromobenzyl)aniline (C3): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the yellow oil 92 mg, 70% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz,

23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.58-7.55 (m, 2H), 7.36 – 7.29 (m, 4H), 6.87-6.82 (m, 1H), 6.71 (d, *J* = 7.1 Hz, 2H), 4.39 (s, 2H), 4.15 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 147.7, 138.5, 131.6, 129.3, 129.0, 120.9, 117.8, 112.8, 47.6 ppm. HRMS

(ESI) calcd. for C₁₃H₁₃BrN [M+H]: 262.0231, found: 262.0235.

N-(3-methylbenzyl)aniline (C4): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the yellow oil 83 mg, 84% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1). ¹**H** NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.23-7.18 (m, 5H), 7.15 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.74 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 6.64 (d, J = 7.6Hz, 2H), 4.27 (s, 2H), 3.95 (bs, 1H), 2.38 (s, 3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C,

CDCl₃): δ = 148.1, 139.3, 138.2, 129.1, 128.4, 128.2, 127.9, 124.5, 117.4, 112.7, 48.2, 21.3 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₄H₁₆N [M+H]: 198.1283, found: 198.1278.

N-(2-methylbenzyl)aniline (C5): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the yellow oil 67 mg, 68% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30:1).

¹**H NMR** (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 7.43$ (d, J = 6.1Hz, 1H), 7.31 – 7.26 (m, 5H), 6.85 – 6.68 (m, 1H), 6.74 – 6.71 (m, 2H), 4.35 (s, 2H), 3.90 (bs, 1H), 2.47 (d, J = 1.7 Hz, 3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 148.2, 136.9, 136.3, 130.3, 129.2, 128.2, 127.3, 126.1, 117.4, 112.6, 46.3, 18.9$ ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₄H₁₆N [M+H]: 198.1283, found: 198.1281.

N-(4-(tert-butyl)benzyl)aniline (C6): The title compound was prepared according to



the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 108 mg, 90% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz,

23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 7.36 (dd, J = 19.9, 8.3 Hz, 4H), 7.17 (t, J = 6.2 Hz, 2H), 6.72 (t, *J* = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 6.65 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 4.30 (s, 2H), 4.00 (bs, 1H), 1.33 (s, 9H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): $\delta = 150.2$, 148.5, 136.7, 129.2, 127.3, 125.5,

117.3, 112.8, 47.8, 34.5, 31.2 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₇H₂₂N [M+H]: 240.1752, found: 240.1753.

N-(4-methoxybenzyl)aniline (C7): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 98 mg, 92% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1). ¹**H** NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.31 (d, J = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.19 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 6.90 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.73 (t, J =

7.3 Hz, 1H), 6.63 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 4.27 (s, 2H), 3.96 (bs, 1H), 3.82 (s, 3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 158.8$, 148.2, 131.3, 129.2, 128.8, 117.4, 114.0, 112.8, 55.3, 47.7 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₄H₁₆NO [M+H]: 214.1232, found: 214.1234.

N-(2-methoxybenzyl)aniline (C8): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 73 mg, 69% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1). ¹**H NMR** (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.33 (d, J = 7.4 Hz, 1H), 7.28 (t, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.19 (dd, J = 11.3,

4.3 Hz, 2H), 6.92 (dd, J = 16.1, 7.9 Hz, 2H), 6.74 – 6.67 (m, 3H), 4.36 (s, 2H), 4.15 (bs, 1H), 3.88 (s, 3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 157.3$, 148.4, 129.1, 128.8, 128.2, 127.3, 120.5, 117.3, 113.0, 110.2, 55.2, 43.4 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₄H₁₆NO [M+H]: 214.1232, found: 214.1233.

N-(naphthalen-1-vlmethyl)aniline (C9): The title compound was prepared according



the general procedure and purified by column to chromatography to give a white solid 81 mg, 70% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 1%). ¹H NMR (299.86) MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 8.22$ -8.19 (m, 1H), 8.06-8.03 (m, 1H), 7.96 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 7.68 – 7.64 (m, 3H), 7.59–7.54 (m, 1H), 7.38 (t, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 6.94 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 6.79 (d, J = 7.9 Hz, 2H), 4.81 (s, 2H), 4.04 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 148.2$, 134.3, 133.8, 131.5, 129.3, 128.7, 128.1, 126.3, 126.0, 125.8, 125.5, 123.5, 117.5, 112.7, 46.4 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₇H₁₆N [M+H]: 234.1283, found: 234.1284.

N-(naphthalen-1-ylmethyl)aniline (C10): The title compound was prepared



according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the yellow oil 76 mg, 80% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C,

CD₂Cl₂): $\delta = 7.33 - 7.25$ (m, 3H), 7.13 - 7.06 (m, 2H), 6.84 - 6.76 (m, 3H), 4.61 (s, 2H), 4.26 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): $\delta = 147.8$, 143.4, 129.2, 126.8, 125.0, 124.5, 117.9, 113.1, 43.3. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₁H₁₂NS [M+H]: 190.0690, found: 190.0692.

N-benzhydrylaniline (C11): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 46 mg, 36% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 3%). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.45-7.37 (m, 8H), 7.33 (d, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H),

7.21 – 7.17 (m, 2H), 6.79-6.75 (m, 1H), 6.62 – 6.60 (m, 2H), 5.58 (s, 1H), 4.29 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 147.4, 142.9, 129.1, 128.8, 127.5, 127.4, 117.7, 113.5, 63.1 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₉H₁₈N [M+H]: 260.1439, found: 260.1437.

N-heptylaniline (C12): The title compound was prepared according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 36 mg, 41%



yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 7.22-7.17 (m, 2H), 6.73-6.68 (m, 1H), 6.66-6.63 (m, 2H), 3.70 (bs, 1H), 3.14 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H),

1.68-1.64 (m, 2H), 1.46-1.38 (m, 6H), 1.00-0.96 (m, 3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 148.8, 129.1, 116.8, 112.5, 43.9, 31.7, 29.5, 26.9, 22.7, 13.9 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₂H₂₀N [M+H]: 178.1595, found: 178.15956.

N-(2-(6,6-dimethylbicyclo[3.1.1]heptan-2-yl)ethyl)aniline (C13): The title



compound was prepared according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 61 mg, 53% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1,

DCM 1%). ¹**H** NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): $\delta = 7.19 - 7.14$ (m, 2H), 6.70-6.65 (m, 1H), 6.65 - 6.58 (m, 2H), 5.40 - 5.13 (m, 1H), 3.83 - 3.58 (m, 3H), 2.48 - 2.35 (m, 4H), 2.04-2.01 (m, 1H), 1.99 - 1.83 (m, 2H), 1.40 (d, J = 9.3 Hz, 1H), 1.38 (s, 1H), 1.31 (s, 2H), 0.79 (d, J = 4.5 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): $\delta = 148.6$, 145.8, 129.0, 118.6, 118.2, 116.9, 116.8, 112.7, 45.3, 41.2, 40.9, 40.8, 40.7, 40.5, 27.5, 26.0, 25.9, 25.7, 24.8, 23.7, 23.6, 21.7, 21.5, 19.7. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₆H₂₄N [M+H]: 230.1909, found: 230.190.

N-(3,7-dimethyloct-6-en-1-yl)aniline (C14): The title compound was prepared



according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 46 mg, 40% yield. Purification by column

chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 1%). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.22 (t, J = 7.9 Hz, 2H), 6.74 (td, J = 7.3, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 6.65 (d, J = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 5.16 (t, J = 7.1 Hz, 1H), 3.58 (bs, 1H), 3.29 – 3.01 (m, 2H), 2.06 (dt, J = 15.5, 7.8 Hz, 2H), 1.74 (d, J = 7.7 Hz, 3H), 1.72 – 1.56 (m, 5H), 1.46 (tdd, J = 11.9, 11.0, 7.0 Hz, 2H), 1.36 – 1.17 (m, 1H), 1.00 (d, J = 6.4 Hz, 3H); ¹³C **NMR** (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 148.6, 131.3, 129.2, 124.7, 117.1, 112.71, 42.0, 37.1, 36.7, 30.5, 25.8, 25.5, 19.6, 17.7. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₆H₂₆N [M+H]: 232.2065, found: 232.2066.

N-benzyl-4-chloroaniline (C15): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the yellow oil 91 mg, 84% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz,

23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.42 – 7.33 (m, 5H), 7.20 – 7.15 (m, 2H), 6.61 – 6.56 (m, 2H), 4.34 (s, 2H), 4.09 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 146.5, 138.8, 128.9, 128.6, 127.3, 127.2, 121.9, 113.8, 48.2 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₃H₁₃ClN [M+H]: 218.0737, found: 218.0738.

N-benzyl-4-bromoaniline (C16): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the yellow oil 89 mg, 68% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz,

23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.40 – 7.33 (m, 5H), 7.28 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.53 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 4.33 (s, 2H), 4.11 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C **NMR** (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 147.0, 138.8, 131.8, 128.6, 127.3, 114.3, 109.0, 48.1 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₃H₁₃BrN [M+H]: 262.0231, found: 262.0233.

N-benzyl-4-iodoaniline (C17): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 66 mg, 43% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.47 – 7.46 (m, 2H), 7.40 – 7.31 (m, 5H), 6.47 – 6.42 (m, 2H), 4.33 (d, J = 4.6 Hz, 2H), 4.13 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 147.5$, 138.2, 137.7, 128.2, 127.2, 127.3, 115.0, 78.0, 47.9 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₃H₁₃IN [M+H]: 310.0093, found: 310.0094.

4-(benzylamino)benzonitrile (C18): The title compound was prepared according to



the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 27 mg, 26% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz,

23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.41 – 7.40 (m, 2H), 7.38-7.31 m, 5H), 6.59 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 4.66 (bs, 1H), 4.38 (d, *J* = 5.5 Hz, 2H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 151.1, 137.8, 133.8, 128.9, 127.7, 127.3, 120.2, 112.4, 98.5, 47.5 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₄H₁₃N₂ [M+H]: 209.1079, found: 209.1077.

N-benzyl-4-ethylaniline (C19): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the yellow oil 95 mg, 90% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz,

23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 7.44 - 7.26$ (m, 5H), 7.09-7.06 (m, 2H), 6.66-6.62 (m, 2H), 4.35 (s, 2H), 3.95 (bs, 1H), 2.60 (q, J = 7.5 Hz, 2H), 1.24 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 3H) ppm; ¹³C **NMR** (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 146.1$, 139.6, 133.3, 128.5, 128.5, 127.5, 127.1, 112.9, 48.6, 27.9, 15.9 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₅H₁₈N [M+H]: 212.1439, found: 212.1438.

N-benzyl-2,5-dimethylaniline (C20): The title compound was prepared according to



the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the yellow oil 106 mg, 71% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.48 – 7.43 (m, 4H), 7.39-7.36 (m, 1H), 6.51 (s, 1H), 6.38 (s, 2H), 4.39 (s, 2H), 3.97 (bs, 1H), 2.34(s, 6H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 148.3, 139.6, 138.8, 128.5, 127.5, 127.1, 119.5, 110.87, 48.3, 21.4 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₅H₁₈N [M+H]: 212.1439, found: 212.1440.

N-benzyl-3,5-dimethylaniline (C21): The title compound was prepared according to



the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give the yellow oil 87 mg, 83% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz,

23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.48 – 7.38 (m, 5H), 6.51 (d, *J* = 3.7 Hz, 1H), 6.39(d, *J* = 4.2 Hz, 2H), 4.39 (d, *J* = 4.2 Hz, 2H), 3.97 (bs, 1H), 2.35 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 6H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 148.2, 139.6, 138.8, 128.5, 127.4, 127.1, 119.5, 110.7, 48.3, 21.4 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₅H₁₈N [M+H]: 212.1439, found: 212.1437.

N-benzyl-2-(tert-butyl)aniline (C22): The title compound was prepared according to



the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 69 mg, 58% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 1%). ¹H NMR (299.86

MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 7.60 - 7.28$ (m, 6H), 7.17 (d, J = 6.4 Hz, 1H), 6.77 (dt, J = 14.4, 7.7 Hz, 2H), 4.47 (d, J = 6.3 Hz, 2H), 4.35 (s, 1H), 1.51 (d, J = 6.4 Hz, 9H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 146.1$, 139.6, 133.2, 128.7, 127.4, 127.2, 126.2, 117.2, 111.9, 109.9, 109.9, 48.8, 34.5, 29.9 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₇H₂₂N [M+H]: 240.1752, found: 240.1753.

N-benzyl-[1,1'-biphenyl]-2-amine (C23): The title compound was prepared according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 91 mg, 70% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl



ether = 6 : 1, DCM 10%). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.78 – 7.67 (m, 4H), 7.61 – 7.40 (m, 8H), 7.06 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 1H), 6.92 (d, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 4.69 (bs, 1H), 4.55 (s, 2H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 145.2, 139.8, 130.5, 129.7, 129.2, 129.0, 128.9, 127.9, 127.6,

127.3, 117.5, 111.1, 48.3 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₉H₁₈N [M+H]: 260.1439, found: 260.1440.

N-benzyl-4-methoxyaniline (C24): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 96 mg, 90% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 1%). ¹H NMR

(299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 7.41 - 7.34$ (m, 4H), 7.31 - 7.29 (m, 1H), 6.81 - 6.79 (m, 2H), 6.64 - 6.62 (m, 2H), 4.30 (s, 2H), 3.76 (s, 3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 152.3$, 142.3, 139.6, 128.6, 127.6, 127.2, 114.9, 114.2, 55.8, 49.3 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₄H₁₆NO [M+H]: 214.1232, found: 214.1232.

N-benzyl-3-methoxyaniline (C25): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 81 mg, 76% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 1%). ¹H NMR

(299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 7.43 - 7.33$ (m, 5H), 7.14 (t, J = 8.1 Hz, 1H), 6.36 - 6.25 (m, 2H), 6.24 (t, J = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 4.35 (s, 2H), 4.14 (bs, 1H), 3.80 (s, 3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 160.9$, 149.6, 139.4, 130.1, 128.7, 127.6, 127.3, 106.1, 102.8, 99.0, 55.1, 48.4 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₄H₁₆NO [M+H]: 214.1232, found: 214.1235.

N-benzyl-4-(thiophen-2-yl)aniline (C26): The title compound was prepared according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a



white solid 110 mg, 83% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1, DCM 10%). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 7.46 – 7.28 (m, 10H), 6.69 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 4.39 (s, 2H), 4.20 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C

NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 147.3, 142.5, 139.2, 128.6, 127.4, 127.4, 127.2, 126.1, 125.7, 125.56, 117.7, 113.0, 109.9, 109.9, 48.2 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₇H₁₆NS [M+H]: 266.1003, found: 266.1005.

(E)-N-benzyl-4-styrylaniline (C27): The title compound was prepared according to



the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 94 mg, 66%yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 20 : 1, DCM 10%).

¹**H NMR** (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.50 (d, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 7.43 – 7.20 (m, 10H), 7.00 (dd, *J* = 39.8, 16.2 Hz, 2H), 6.66 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 4.39 (s, 2H), 4.24 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³**C NMR** (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 147.8, 139.1, 138.1, 128.8, 128.7, 128.6, 127.8, 127.5, 127.3, 127.1, 126.8, 126.6, 124.6, 113.0, 48.2 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₂₁H₂₀N [M+H]: 286.1596, found: 286.1597.

N-benzyl-5-bromopyridin-2-amine (C28): The title compound was prepared



according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 69 mg, 75% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 5 : 1, DCM 10%). ¹H

NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 8.08$ (d, J = 4.4 Hz, 1H), 7.48 – 7.28 (m, 5H), 7.27 – 7.17 (m, 1H), 6.63 – 6.50 (m, 1H), 6.35 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 4.92 (s, 1H), 4.48 (d, J = 5.7 Hz, 2H) ppm; ¹³C **NMR** (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 158.5$, 148.2, 139.0, 137.4, 128.6, 127.4, 113.1, 106.8, 46.3. ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₂H₁₃N₂ [M+H]: 185.1079, found: 185.1080.

N-benzyl-5-bromopyridin-2-amine (C29): The title compound was prepared



according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 78 mg, 60% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 5 : 1, DCM 10%).¹H

NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 8.01$ (d, J = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 7.37 (dd, J = 8.8, 2.5 Hz, 1H), 7.29 – 7.03 (m, 5H), 6.20 (d, J = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 4.99 (s, 1H), 4.39 (d, J = 5.8 Hz, 2H) ppm; ¹³C **NMR** (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 157.1$, 148.7, 139.7, 138.6, 128.7, 127.4, 127.3, 108.2, 107.2, 46.3 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₂H₁₂BrN₂ [M+H]: 263.0184, found: 263.0185.

N-benzylpyridin-2-amine (C30): The title compound was prepared according to the



general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 72 mg, 73% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 5 : 1, DCM 10%). ¹H NMR

(299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.84 (d, *J* = 5.2 Hz, 1H), 7.40 – 7.02 (m, 5H), 6.49 – 6.27 (m, 1H), 6.09 (s, 1H), 4.95 (bs, 1H), 4.38 (d, *J* = 5.7 Hz, 2H), 2.10 (s, 3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 158.8, 148.3, 147.7, 139.3, 128.5, 127.3, 127.0, 114.6, 114.6, 106.9, 106.8, 46.2, 21.1 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₃H₁₅N₂ [M+H]: 199.1235, found: 199.1238.

N-benzylpyridin-3-amine (C31): The title compound was prepared according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 75 mg, 81% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 5 : 1, DCM 10%). ¹H NMR

(299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): $\delta = 8.07$ (d, J = 2.9 Hz, 1H), 7.94 (dd, J = 4.6, 1.3 Hz, 1H), 7.48 – 7.20 (m, 5H), 7.08 (dd, J = 8.3, 4.6 Hz, 1H), 6.93-6.89 (m, 1H), 4.40 (br,

3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 143.7, 138.5, 138.2, 135.7, 128.2, 126.9, 126.86, 123.1, 117.9, 47.2 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₁₂H₁₃N₂ [M+H]: 185.1079, found: 185.1078.

N-(4-methylbenzyl)pyridin-3-amine (C33): The title compound was prepared



according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 80 mg, 81% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 1%). ¹H

NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): $\delta = 8.05$ (dd, J = 2.9, 0.5 Hz, 1H), 7.93 (dd, J = 4.6, 1.4 Hz, 1H), 7.41 – 7.23 (m, 2H), 7.19 (dd, J = 7.0, 1.4 Hz, 2H), 7.07 (ddd, J = 8.3, 4.7, 0.7 Hz, 1H), 6.92-6.88 (m, 1H), 4.32 (s, 3H), 2.36 (s, 3H). ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): $\delta = 144.2$, 138.5, 137.1, 136.1, 135.7, 129.3, 127.3, 123.5, 118.3, 47.4, 20.8 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₃H₁₅N₂ [M+H]: 199.1235, found: 199.1238.

N-(4-methoxybenzyl)pyridin-3-amine (C34): The title compound was prepared



according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 88 mg, 82% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether

= 30 : 1, DCM 1%). ¹**H** NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 8.05 (d, *J* = 2.0 Hz, 1H), 7.93 (d, *J* = 4.3 Hz, 1H), 7.43 – 7.23 (m, 2H), 7.08 (dd, *J* = 8.2, 4.6 Hz, 1H), 6.98 – 6.80 (m, 3H), 4.29 (s, 3H), 3.81 (s, 3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 159.0, 138.5, 136.1, 130.7, 128.6, 123.5, 118.3, 114.0, 47.1 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₃H₁₅N₂O [M+H]: 215.1184, found: 215.1184.

N-(4-(methylthio)benzyl)pyridin-3-amine (C35): The title compound was prepared according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 91 mg, 79% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel



(pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 1%). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 8.05 (s, 1H), 7.93 (d, J = 4.4 Hz, 1H), 7.45 – 7.17 (m, 4H), 7.07 (dd, J = 8.2, 4.6 Hz, 1H), 6.97 – 6.70 (m, 1H), 4.37-4.33 (m, 3H), 2.49 (d, J = 1.1 Hz, 3H) ppm; ¹³C

NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 138.7, 137.6, 136.1, 135.6, 127.9, 126.7, 123.5, 118.3, 47.2, 15.6 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₃H₁₅N₂S [M+H]: 231.0956, found: 231.0956.

N-(4-chlorobenzyl)-4-iodoaniline (C36): The title compound was prepared according



to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 68 mg, 40%yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 1%).

¹**H** NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta = 7.46 - 7.43$ (m, 2H), 7.39 - 7.33 (m, 4H), 6.47 - 6.44 (m, 2H), 4.34 (s, 3H) ppm; ¹³**C** NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): $\delta =$ 147.9, 138.1, 132.9, 129.4, 128.8, 128.7, 117.8, 112.9, 47.6 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₃H₁₂ClIN [M+H]: 343.9703, found: 343.9704.

(E)-N-(4-chlorobenzyl)-4-styrylaniline (C37): The title compound was prepared



(C37): The title compound was prepared according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 113 mg, 71% yield. Purification by column chromatography on

silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 1%). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.53 – 7.52 (m, 2H), 7.41 – 7.28 (m, 8H), 7.25-7.10 (m, 1H), 7.01 (dd, *J* = 38.0, 16.3 Hz, 2H), 6.64 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 4.38 (s, 2H), 4.21 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 147.4, 138.0, 137.7, 132.9, 128.8, 128.6, 128.6, 127.7, 126.8, 126.0, 124.7, 112.9, 47.4 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₂₁H₁₉ClN [M+H]: 320.1206, found: 320.1203.

N¹-hexyl-N³-(4-methoxybenzyl)benzene-1,3-diamine (C38): The title compound was



prepared according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 104 mg, 73% yield. Purification by

column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 1%). ¹**H** NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): $\delta = 7.34 - 7.31$ (m, 2H), 6.97 - 6.90 (m, 3H), 6.03 - 5.99 (m, 2H), 5.90 (t, J = 2.2 Hz, 1H), 4.25 (s, 2H), 3.82 (s, 3H), 3.08 (t, J = 7.0Hz, 2H), 1.62 - 1.57 (m, 2H), 1.48 - 1.40 (m, 2H), 0.98 (t, J = 7.3 Hz, 3H) ppm; ¹³**C** NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): $\delta = 158.8$, 149.9, 149.5, 131.9, 129.7, 128.6, 113.8, 102.7, 102.4, 96.9, 55.2, 47.6, 43.6, 31.7, 20.3, 13.7 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₁₈H₂₅N₂O [M+H]: 285.1967, found: 285.1966.

 N^1 , N^3 -dibenzylbenzene-1, 3-diamine (C39): The title compound was prepared



according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 95 mg, 66% yield. Purification by column chromatography

on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 1%). ¹**H** NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 7.40-7.27 (m, 10H), 6.95 (t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.05 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 2.1 Hz, 2H), 5.94 (t, *J* = 2.1 Hz, 1H), 4.30 (d, *J* = 3.5 Hz, 4H), 4.07 (bs, 2H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 149.4, 140.0, 129.8, 128.5, 127.4, 127.0, 102.9, 97.2, 48.1 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₂₀H₂₁N₂ [M+H]: 289.1705, found: 289.1707.

5. Gram scale experiments



Open system:

10 mmol Scale: Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried Schlenk tube (250 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (16 mmol, 1.79 g), benzyl alcohol **A1** (20 mmol), aniline **B1** (10 mmol), benzonitrile (16 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (80 mL). The tube was sealed, taken out of the glove box and a reflux condenser was attached under argon stream. The mixture was heated to a gentle reflux for 24 hours under inert atmosphere in an open system at 120 °C (oil bath). After cooling, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 200 mL). The combined organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. Then the corresponding reaction mixture was purified by flash column chromatography on a silica gel column (pentane/ethyl ether = 10/1) to give the desired product **C1** in 80.0 % yield (1.47 g).

100 mmol Scale:

Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried flask (2.5 L volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (160 mol, 17.9 g), benzyl alcohol A1 (200 mmol), aniline B1 (100 mmol), benzonitrile (160 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (0.5 L). The flask was sealed, taken out of the glove box and a reflux condenser was attached under argon stream. The mixture was heated to a gentle reflux for 48 hours under inert atmosphere in an open system at 120 °C (oil bath). After cooling, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 1 L). The combined organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. Then the corresponding reaction mixture was purified by recrystallized to give the desired product C1 (pentane/diethyl ether at the -10 °C) in 70.99 % yield (13.01 g).

1000 mmol Scale:



Under nitrogen, an oven-dried flask (25 L volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (1600 mol, 179 g), benzyl alcohol A1 (2000 mmol), aniline B1 (1000 mmol), benzonitrile (1600 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (5 L). The flask was sealed and was put into the autoclave under argon stream. Then the mixture was stirred at 120 °C for 72 hours under inert atmosphere. After cooling, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 1 L). The combined organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. Then the corresponding reaction mixture was purified by recrystallized three times to give the desired benzamide product (DCM/diethyl ether at 0 °C) in 90 % yield (108.9 g).

Hereafter, the combined organic phase concentrated and was purified by recrystallized three times to give the desired amine product C1 (diethyl ether/hexane at -30 °C) in 72 % yield (137.8 g).



Benzamide (CAS: 55-21-0): a white solid 108.9 mg, 90% yield. Melting Point (°C): 127–128 °C. ¹H NMR (500 MHz,, CDCl₃): $\delta = 7.82$ (d, J = 7.3 Hz, 2H), 7.51 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 7.43 (t, J =7.3 Hz, 2H), 6.33 (bs, 2H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃): δ

= 169.7, 133.4, 131.9, 128.6, 127.3, 81.6 ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for C₇H₈NO [M+H]: 122.0606, found: 122.0608.

6. Synthesis of C40



Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried pressure tube (38 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), A1 (1.0 mmol), benzene-1,3-diamine (0.6 mmol), D13 (0.8 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL). Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the reaction was cooled, A7 (1.0 mmol), D13 (0.8 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL) were added into the reaction mixture. Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the reaction was cooled, the reaction mixture. Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After another 15 hours the reaction was cooled, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 15 mL). The combined organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. A small aliquot of the organic phase was analyzed by GC or GC-MS to monitor products formation. Purification of the remainder by column chromatography on silica gel gave the corresponding products C40 (pentane/ethyl ether = 15/1 - 5/1) in the reported yield.

*N*¹-benzyl-*N*³-(4-methoxybenzyl)benzene-1,3-diamine (C40): The title compound was prepared according to the general procedure and purified by column chromatography to give a white solid 83 mg, 51% yield. Purification by column chromatography on silica gel (pentane/ethyl ether = 30 : 1, DCM 3%). ¹H NMR (299.86 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 7.39 (dd, *J* = 7.2, 4.1 Hz, 4H), 7.30 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 3H), 7.11 – 6.79 (m, 3H), 6.05 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 2.2 Hz, 2H), 5.94 (t, *J* = 1.8 Hz, 1H), 4.31 (s, 2H), 4.23 (s, 2H), 4.04 (s, 2H), 3.82 (s, 3H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C, CD₂Cl₂): δ = 158.8, 149.5, 149.4, 140.0, 131.9, 129.8, 128.7, 128.5, 128.4, 127.4 127.0, 113.8, 102.9, 102.8, 97.2, 55.2, 48.1, 47.5 ppm. HRMS (ESI) calcd. for C₂₁H₂₃N₂O [M+H]: 319.1810, found: 319.1812.

7. Mechanistic investigations

7.1 Control experiments

	$ + H_0 N - Ph$	standard conditions	Ph
Ph ^r A	1 B1	new tube pure substrates	н С1, 94%
Entry	Reaction condition		C1 (%)
1	New seal tube, 99.99% t	t-BuOK -	94
2	New seal tube, 99.99% t	t-BuOK Pure substrates	93
3	New seal tube	-	0
4	New seal tube	H ₂ O (0.8 mmol)	<5

Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried new pressure tube (38 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), A1 (1.0 mmol), B1 (0.5 mmol), D13 (0.8 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL). Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the reaction was cooled, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 15 mL). The combined organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. A small aliquot of the organic phase was analyzed by GC or GC-MS to monitor products formation.

7.2 Control experiments with 18-crown-6 additive



Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried new pressure tube (38 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), A1 (1.0 mmol), B1 (0.5 mmol), D13 (0.8 mmol), 18-crown-6 and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL). Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the reaction was cooled, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 15 mL). The combined

organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. A small aliquot of the organic phase was analyzed by GC or GC-MS to monitor products formation.

7.3 Control experiments with radical scavenger



Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried new pressure tube (38 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), A1 (1.0 mmol), B1 (0.5 mmol), D13 (0.8 mmol), additives (1.0 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL). Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the reaction was cooled, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 15 mL). The combined organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. A small aliquot of the organic phase was analyzed by GC or GC-MS to monitor products formation.

7.4 Isolated the intermediate E1



Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried new pressure tube (38 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), **B1** (0.6 mmol), **D13** (0.5 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL). Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the reaction was cooled, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 15 mL). The combined organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. A small aliquot of the organic phase was analyzed by GC or GC-MS to monitor products formation. Purification of the remainder by column

chromatography on silica gel gave the corresponding products E1 (pentane/ethyl ether = 5/1) in the reported yield.

7.5 The reaction of E1 with alcohols



Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried new pressure tube (38 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), A1 (1.0 mmol), E1 (0.5 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL). Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the reaction was cooled, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 15 mL). The combined organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. A small aliquot of the organic phase was analyzed by GC or GC-MS to monitor products formation.

7.6 The cascade reaction



Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried new pressure tube (38 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), **A1** (1.0 mmol), **B1** (0.5 mmol), **D13** (0.8 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL). Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the reaction was cooled, **A1** (1.0 mmol) was added into the reaction mixture under the glove box. Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the reaction was cooled, **A1** (1.0 mmol) was added into the reaction mixture under the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the reaction was cooled, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 15 mL). The combined organic phase was

dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. A small aliquot of the organic phase was analyzed by GC or GC-MS to monitor products formation.

7.7 ¹⁵N labeled experiment



Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried new pressure tube (38 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (0.4 mmol), A1 (0.5 mmol), 15 N-B1 (0.25 mmol), D13 (0.4 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (1.0 mL). Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After 15 hours the reaction was cooled, quenched with half-saturated brine and extracted with dichloromethane (4 x 15 mL). The combined organic phase was dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated. A small aliquot of the organic phase was analyzed by GC or GC-MS to monitor products formation. Purification of the remainder by column chromatography on silica gel gave the corresponding products ¹⁵N-C1 (pentane/ethyl ether = 15/1 - 5/1) in the reported yield.

N-benzylaniline (¹⁵N-C1): the light yellow oil 41.6 mg, 90% yield. ¹H NMR (299.86



MHz, 23.0 °C, CDCl₃): δ = 7.40 – 7.14 (m, 5H), 7.09 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 6.63 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.55 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 4.23 (s, 2H), 3.94 (bs, 1H) ppm; ¹³C NMR (75.41 MHz, 23.0 °C,

CDCl₃): δ 148.2, 139.4, 129.2, 128.6, 127.5, 127.2, 117.5, 112.8 (d, ${}^{2}J_{C-15N} = 2.3$ Hz), 48.2 (d, ${}^{1}J_{C-15N} = 2.6$ Hz) ppm. **HRMS** (ESI) calcd. for [M+H]: 185.1097, found: 185.1098.



Fig S1 The HRMS of the *N*-benzylaniline (¹⁵N-C1)

7.8 Time-conversion-plot reaction



Using a nitrogen-filled glove box, an oven-dried new pressure tube (38 mL volume) was charged with a magnetic stirring bar, *t*-BuOK (0.8 mmol), A1 (1.0 mmol), B1 (0.5 mmol), D13 (0.8 mmol) and 1,4-dioxane (2.0 mL). Then the seal tube was closed tightly with a teflon cap, removed from the glove box and immersed into a pre-heated oil bath (120 °C). After desired time the reaction was cooled, quenched with half-saturated brine and a small aliquot of the organic phase was analyzed by GC and GC-MS to monitor product formation. Composition of A1, B1, D13, C1, E1 and benzamide determined by GC-analysis using *n*-dodecane as internal standard.



Fig S2 Time-conversion-plot for the reaction

8. References

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9. NMR Spectra


























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