Electronic Supplementary Information

Ultra-Fast and Sustainable Formal [3 + 3] Cycloadditions Enabled by Mixed Variable Optimization on an Automated Microscale Flow Platform

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1. General information

All commercially available chemicals were used as received unless otherwise noted. ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra were recorded at 300 or 400 and 75 MHz or 100 MHz, respectively. ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra were referenced to the internal deuterated solvent (CDCl₃) at 7.26 and 77.16 ppm, respectively. FT-IR spectra were recorded in the ATR mode. Wavelengths of maximum absorbance (v_{max}) are quoted in wave numbers (cm⁻¹). High resolution mass spectrometry (HRMS) was recorded on a microTOF spectrometer equipped with orthogonal electrospray interface (ESI). Analytical thin-layer chromatography (TLC) was carried out on silica gel 60 F₂₅₄ plates and visualized with a UV lamp at 254 nm or stained with a basic potassium permanganate solution. Flash column chromatography was performed using silica gel 60 (40–63 µm).

2. Details of the experimental setup

HPLC pumps (JASCO PU2080) equipped with a RS-232 port were employed to flow the solution through the system. A sampler handler (JASCO AS 2055) equipped with a RS-232 port was used to inject the reagents in the line. The reactor coil was heated with a heating plate (Heidolph, MR Hei-Connect) equipped with a RS-232 port. A 2-way 6-port valve (VICI, Cheminert C2-3006D) equipped with a RS-232 port was used to inject an aliquot of the crude mixture within the on-line HPLC unit. The HPLC column outlet was connected to a UV detector (JASCO, UV 2075) equipped with a RS-232 port. The flow outlet was connected to a programmable fraction collector (Advantec, CHF 1225C). All units equipped with a RS-232 port were autonomously controlled with MATLAB[®] through the use of communication protocols provided by the manufacturers.

3. Latin hypercube sampling (LHS) – Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Optimization algorithm

Latin hypercube sampling (LHS) is a statistical method for generating a near-random sample of parameter values from a multidimensional distribution. In essence, LHS provides a representative sampling of the parameter space, thereby improving the reliability of the results obtained from experimental designs. A Latin hypercube is the n-dimensional generalization of a Latin square, which is a squared grid containing only one experiment per row and per column. Fig. S1 represents the distribution of our DoE using LHS.



Fig. S1 Data distribution using LHS

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is a statistical method that evaluates whether the means of groups exposed to different treatments significantly differ from each other. Specifically, ANOVA examines whether varying one or more factors in each group has a significant effect on a given response variable. ANOVA initially states the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences between the compared groups; then it tests this hypothesis by examining the variance within the groups and comparing it to the variance between the groups. If the between-groups variance significant differences between the groups variance, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating significant differences between the groups. In ANOVA, the p-value is a probability value that measures the strength of evidence against the null hypothesis. The smaller the p-value, the stronger the evidence against the null hypothesis. Typically, a p-value of less than 0.05 is considered statistically significant, indicating that the observed data is unlikely to have occurred by chance alone.

We performed two-way ANOVA to assess the effect of two factors (i.e., type of solvent and type of catalyst). The effects of these factors were evaluated in three different response variables (throughput, yield and concentration of product at the reactor outlet). The ANOVA results for the three studies are given in Tables S1-S3, being columns the types of solvents and rows the types of catalysts.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Prob>F
Columns	0.359764	2	0.179882	1.995267	1.51E-01
Rows	0.199951	2	0.099976	1.108937	0.340916
Interaction	0.080089	4	0.020022	0.222088	0.924336
Error	3.24556	36	0.090154		
Total	3.885364	44			

Table S1. T	hroughput	two-way Al	NOVA.
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Fig. S2 Post-hoc interpretation of the throughput two-way ANOVA

Table S2. Yield two-way ANOVA.

Source	SS	df		MS	F	Prob>F
Columns	2380.133	4	2	1190.067	11.75052	1.18E-04
Rows	2707.733	4	2	1353.867	13.36786	4.55E-05
Interaction	766.9333	2	4	191.7333	1.893143	0.132854
Error	3646	30	6	101.2778		
Total	9500.8	44	4			



Fig. S3 Post-hoc interpretation of the yield two-way ANOVA

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob>F
Columns	0.00416	2	0.00208	7.299096	0.002183
Rows	0.010394	2	0.005197	18.23435	3.39E-06
Interaction	0.001639	4	0.00041	1.437654	0.241547
Error	0.01026	36	0.000285		
Total	0.026453	44			

Table S3. Concentration at the reactor outlet two-way ANOVA.



Fig. S4 Post-hoc interpretation of the concentration at the reactor outlet two-way ANOVA



Fig. S5 Product concentration distribution of the seven discrete combinations identified as superior by the post-hoc ANOVA interpretation. Outliers are > 1.5 times the interquartile range away from the box limits

Table S4. Concentration at the reactor outlet two-way ANOVA (without outliers).

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob>F
Columns	0.002854	2	0.001427	21.00975	3.14E-06
Rows	0.006051	2	0.003025	44.53513	2.82E-09
Interaction	0.001064	4	0.000266	3.915976	0.012376
Error	0.001834	27	6.79E-05		
Total	0.011803	35			

4. Optimization algorithm

The optimization algorithm here used has been described in our previous reports.^{1,2}

5. Experimental setup of the automated flow platform for the Latin-Hypercube Sampling

An automatic sample handler prepared 190 μ L of the reaction mixture from stock solutions of 1,3-cyclohexanedione **4a** (0.5 M plus xylene as the internal standard at 5 M in EtOH and *i*-PrOH or 0.25 M plus xylene as the internal standard at 2.5 M in CH₃CN), citral **5a** (0.5 M in EtOH and *i*-PrOH or 0.25 M in CH₃CN) and catalysts (0.05 M in EtOH and *i*-PrOH or 0.025 M in CH₃CN). The reaction mixture was injected in a stream of the corresponding solvent pumped at the required flow rate (see Table S4). The formal [3 + 3] cycloaddition occurred in a PEEK reactor coil (5 mL, 0.75 mm id) heated at the required temperature (see Table S4). The reaction mixture in the HPLC unit while the remaining stream was collected in a fraction collector. A mixture of MeOH/H₂O (70/30, v/v) was used as mobile phase for the HPLC analysis at a flowrate of 0.7 mL/min. A UV detector was connected to the outlet of the HPLC column (Agela Promosil C18, 3.5 mm × 150 mm, 5 µm) to follow the absorbance at a wavelength of 270 nm. Peak integration and yield calculation were under full MATLAB automation.

6. Results of the Latin-Hypercube Sampling (LHS)

Expt	Residence	Temperature	Citral	Catalyst	Catalyst	Yield	throughput	Product
#	time	(°C)	5a	loading		(%)	(g.h ⁻¹)	concentration
	(min)		(equiv)	(equiv)				(mol/L)
CH ₃ CN								
1	5.9	29.9	1.36	0.12	7a	71	0.64	0.05
2	5.9	29.9	1.36	0.12	7b	81	0.73	0.06
3	5.9	29.9	1.36	0.12	7c	59	0.53	0.04
4	28.2	33.0	1.73	0.09	7a	80	0.15	0.06
5	28.2	33.0	1.73	0.09	7b	70	0.13	0.05
6	28.2	33.0	1.73	0.09	7c	73	0.14	0.05
7	22.2	36.7	1.01	0.18	7a	83	0.19	0.05
8	22.2	36.7	1.01	0.18	7b	76	0.17	0.05
9	22.2	36.7	1.01	0.18	7c	78	0.17	0.05
10	13.5	44.2	1.95	0.17	7a	96	0.29	0.05
11	13.5	44.2	1.95	0.17	7b	83	0.25	0.04
12	13.5	44.2	1.95	0.17	7c	89	0.27	0.05
13	15.1	48.8	1.46	0.05	7a	85	0.36	0.07
14	15.1	48.8	1.46	0.05	7b	91	0.38	0.08

Table S4. Results of the Latin-Hypercube Sampling

15	15.1	48.8	1.46	0.05	7c	48	0.20	0.04
EtOH								
16	5.9	29.9	1.36	0.12	7a	79	1.42	0.10
17	5.9	29.9	1.36	0.12	7b	52	0.93	0.07
18	5.9	29.9	1.36	0.12	7c	36	0.65	0.06
19	28.2	33.0	1.73	0.09	7a	82	0.30	0.09
20	28.2	33.0	1.73	0.09	7b	56	0.21	0.07
21	28.2	33.0	1.73	0.09	7c	56	0.21	0.08
22	22.2	36.7	1.01	0.18	7a	68	0.30	0.09
23	22.2	36.7	1.01	0.18	7b	45	0.20	0.06
24	22.2	36.7	1.01	0.18	7c	52	0.23	0.07
25	13.5	44.2	1.95	0.17	7a	80	0.48	0.08
26	13.5	44.2	1.95	0.17	7b	61	0.37	0.06
27	13.5	44.2	1.95	0.17	7c	73	0.44	0.07
28	15.1	48.8	1.46	0.05	7a	82	0.74	0.13
29	15.1	48.8	1.46	0.05	7b	68	0.57	0.11
30	15.1	48.8	1.46	0.05	7c	45	0.38	0.12
<i>i</i> -PrOH								
31	5.9	29.9	1.36	0.12	7a	71	1.33	0.11
32	5.9	29.9	1.36	0.12	7b	81	0.91	0.07
33	5.9	29.9	1.36	0.12	7c	59	0.81	0.05

34	28.2	33.0	1.73	0.09	7a	80	0.23	0.11
35	28.2	33.0	1.73	0.09	7b	70	0.18	0.08
36	28.2	33.0	1.73	0.09	7c	73	0.21	0.08
37	22.2	36.7	1.01	0.18	7a	83	0.30	0.09
38	22.2	36.7	1.01	0.18	7b	76	0.22	0.06
39	22.2	36.7	1.01	0.18	7c	78	0.25	0.07
40	13.5	44.2	1.95	0.17	7a	96	0.46	0.09
41	13.5	44.2	1.95	0.17	7b	83	0.35	0.07
42	13.5	44.2	1.95	0.17	7c	89	0.41	0.08
43	15.1	48.8	1.46	0.05	7a	85	0.67	0.14
44	15.1	48.8	1.46	0.05	7b	91	0.54	0.11
45	15.1	48.8	1.46	0.05	7c	48	0.59	0.08

7. Experimental setup of the self-optimizing flow platform

Synthesis of 2-methyl-2-(4-methylpent-3-en-1-yl)-2,6,7,8-tetrahydro-5H-chromen-5-one 6a. An automatic sample handler prepared 190 µL of the reaction mixture from stock solutions of 1,3-cyclohexanedione 4a (0.5 M plus xylene as the internal standard at 5 M), citral 5a (0.5 M) and ethylenediamine 7a (0.05 M). The reaction mixture was injected in a stream of EtOH or *i*-PrOH pumped at the required flow (see Tables S5-6). The oxidative dimerization occurred in a PEEK reactor coil (5 mL, 0.75 mm id) heated at the required temperature. The reactor outlet was connected to an automatic 2-way 6-port switch valve which injected 0.2 μ L of the crude mixture in the HPLC unit while the remaining stream was collected in a fraction collector. A mixture of MeOH/H₂O (70/30, v/v) was used as mobile phase for the HPLC analysis at a flowrate of 0.7 mL/min. A UV detector was connected to the outlet of the HPLC column (Agela Promosil C18, 3.5 mm \times 150 mm, 5 μ m) to follow the absorbance at a wavelength of 270 nm. Peak integration and yield calculation were under full MATLAB automation. The calculated yield was automatically sent to the algorithm which set new experimental conditions to the units. A 4-D optimization of the throughput (g/h) was conducted using the temperature, residence time, equivalents of citral 5a and loading of 7a as the input variables. The initial experiment of the simplex was set at "lower bound + d": 30 °C, 3 min of residence time, 1.2 equivalents of citral 5a and 8 mol% of 7a with d values of 5 °C, 2 min, 0.2 equivalent and 3 mol%, respectively. The lower and upper boundaries of the research space were the following: 25-50 °C, 1-10 min, 1-2 equiv and 5-20 mol% for the temperature, residence time, equivalents of citral 5a and catalyst loading, respectively. An optimum in EtOH giving 11.9 g/h was found in experiment 11 at 33 °C, 1 min of residence time, 1.23 equivalents of citral 5a and 8.4 mol% of 7a (see Table S5 for details). An optimum in *i*-PrOH giving 11.7 g/h was found in experiment 18 at 43 °C, 1 min of residence time, 1 equivalents of citral 5a and 5.5 mol% of 7a (see Table S6 for details).

8. Optimization results for the synthesis 2*H*-pyran 6a

Expt Residence		Temperature	Citral 5a	7a loading	Throughput					
# time (min)		(°C)	(equiv)	(mol%)	(g.h ⁻¹)					
1	2.90	30	1.20	8	3.4					
2	4.80	30	1.20	8	2.2					
3	2.90	30	1.40	8	3.0					
4	2.90	30	1.20	11	2.8					
5	2.90	35	1.20	8	3.2					
6	1	33	1.30	9.5	11.1					
7	1.95	34	1.35	5.7	6.2					
8	1.48	36	1.13	7.6	7.8					
9	1.00	31	1.28	7.5	11.4					
10	1.00	34	1.28	7.5	11.8					
Dimension 1	reduction									
11	1.00	33	1.23	8.4	11.9					
12	1.00	33	1.22	6.1	11.7					
13	1.00	36	1.21	7.1	11.9					
Stopping cr	Stopping criterion reached – Similar results on the last simplex – Dimension recovery									
rejected										

 TABLE S5. Maximization of the reaction yield of 2*H*-pyran 6a in EtOH.

Expt Residence		Temperature	Citral 5a	7a loading	Throughput					
#	time (min)	(°C)	(equiv)	(mol%)	(g.h ⁻¹)					
1	2.90	30	1.20	8	2.5					
2	4.80	30	1.20	8	1.5					
3	2.90	30	1.40	8	2.2					
4	2.90	30	1.20	11	2.4					
5	2.90	35	1.20	8	2.8					
6	1	33	1.30	9.5	9.5					
7	1.95	34	1.05	10.2	4.1					
8	1.48	36	1.18	6.9	5.7					
9	1.00	37	1.17	9.2	9.6					
10	1.00	35	1.17	9.2	9.9					
Dimension	reduction									
11	1.00	35	1.22	8.5	9.9					
12	1.00	39	1.07	8.4	10.5					
13	1.00	41	1.00	8.0	10.5					
14	1.00	37	1.09	7.9	9.9					
15	1.00	41	1.04	7.1	10.9					
16	1.00	43	1.00	6.3	11.0					
Dimension	reduction									
17	1.00	41	1.00	7.2	10.6					
18	1.00	43	1.00	5.5	11.7					
Stopping criterion reached – Similar results on the last simplex – Dimension recovery										
rejected	rejected									

TABLE S6. Maximization of the reaction yield of 2*H*-pyran 6a in *i*-PrOH.

9. Experimental setup for product diversification in EtOH

The experimental setup consisted of two streams as depicted in Fig. 5. The first stream (flow rate: 2.5 ml/min) equipped with a PEEK injection loop (3 mL) loaded with a solution of 1,3-cyclohexanedione **4a** (0.5 M) and citral **5a** (0.62 M) in EtOH meet in a PEEK T-shaped piece (internal volume 0.57 μ L) a second stream (flow rate: 2.5 ml/min) consisting of a solution of and ethylene diamine **7a** (4.2 mM) in EtOH loaded in a second PEEK loop (2 mL). The resulting mixture reacted in a PEEK reactor coil (5 mL, 0.75 mm id) heated at 33 °C. The crude mixture

was collected in a fraction collector purified by flash chromatography on silica gel (5% AcOEtcyclohexane) to give the title compounds.

2-methyl-2-(4-methylpent-3-en-1-yl)-2,6,7,8-tetrahydro-5H-chromen-5-one (6a).

Purification by flash chromatography on silica gel (5% AcOEt-cyclohexane) gave **6a** a yellow oil (211 mg, 86%, 15.9 g.h⁻¹). IR (ATR) *v* 2925, 1644, 1589, 1410, 1069 cm⁻¹. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ (ppm) 6.43 (d, 1H, *J* = 10.1 Hz), 5.16 (d, 1H, *J* = 10.1 Hz), 5.07 (ts, 1H, *J* = 1.4, 7.1 Hz), 2.38 (t, 2H, *J* = 6.8 Hz), 2.36 (t, 2H, *J* = 6.8 Hz), 1.91-2.08 (m, 4H), 1.50-1.72 (m, 2H), 1.65 (d, 3H, *J* = 1.0 Hz), 1.57 (br s, 3H), 1.35 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ (ppm) 194.9, 172.1, 132.1, 123.8, 121.8, 116.5, 110.4, 82.4, 41.8, 36.5, 28.7, 27.5, 25.8, 22.6, 20.8, 17.7. HRMS (ASAP+) *m/z* [M + H]⁺ Calcd for C₁₆H₂₃O₂ 247.1698; Found 247.1701.

2-methyl-2-(4-methylpent-3-en-1-yl)-7-phenyl-2,6,7,8-tetrahydro-5H-chromen-5-one

(**6b**). Purification by flash chromatography on silica gel (5% AcOEt-cyclohexane) gave **6b** as a mixture of two inseparable diastereoisomers (1/1) under the form of a yellow oil (264 mg, 82%, 19.8 g.h⁻¹). IR (ATR) ν 3057, 3028, 2967, 2917, 1647, 1592, 1413 cm⁻¹. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ (ppm) 7.32-7.37 (m, 2H), 7.22-7.28 (m, 3H), 6.49 (d, 1H × 0.5, J = 10.1 Hz), 6.48 (d, 1H x 0.5, J = 10.1 Hz), 5.23 (d, 1H × 0.5, J = 10.1 Hz), 5.21 (d, 1H × 0.5, J = 10.1 Hz), 5.03-5.15 (m, 1H), 3.29-3.38 (m, 1H), 2.54-2.73 (m, 4H), 1.99-2.11 (m, 2H), 1.65-1.82 (m, 5H), 1.60 (s, 3H × 0.5), 1.58 (s, 3H × 0.5), 1.42 (s, 3H × 0.5), 1.35 (s, 3H × 0.5). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ (ppm) 193.9, 193.9, 171.2, 171.1, 142.8, 132.2, 132.1, 128.9, 127.1, 126.8, 123.8, 123.7, 122.0, 116.5, 116.4, 110.2, 110.1, 83.0, 82.9, 43.8, 43.7, 41.9, 41.8, 39.1, 38.8, 36.3, 36.2, 27.8, 27.4, 25.8, 22.9, 22.4, 17.8. HRMS (ASAP +) *m*/*z* [M + H]⁺ Calcd for C₂₂H₂₇O₂ 323.2011; Found 323.2007.

2-methyl-2-(4-methylpent-3-en-1-yl)-2H-benzo[g]chromene-5,10-dione (6c). Purification by flash chromatography on silica gel (5% AcOEt-cyclohexane) gave **6c** a red oil (225 mg, 73%, 16.9 g.h⁻¹). IR (ATR) *v* 3068, 2961, 2921, 2853, 1674, 1650, 1593, 1569, 1333, 1270 cm⁻¹. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz) δ (ppm) 8.06-8.10 (m, 2H), 7.63-7.74 (m, 2H), 6.69 (d, 1H, J = 10.1 Hz), 5.66 (d, 1H, J = 10.1 Hz), 5.02-5.13 (m, 1H), 2.08-2.16 (m, 2H), 1.90-2.00 (m,1H), 1.65-1.73 (m, 1H), 1.61 (d, 3H, J = 1.0 Hz), 1.54 (s, 3H), 1.51 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz) δ (ppm) 182.0, 179.8, 152.9, 134.1, 133.3, 132.4, 131.7, 131.6, 129.9, 126.3, 123.5, 117.6, 116.1, 83.2, 41.7, 27.7, 25.7, 22.8, 17.8. HRMS (ASAP+) *m/z* [M + H]⁺ Calcd for C₂₀H₂₁O₃ 309.1491; Found 309.1488.

(E)-2-(4,8-dimethylnona-3,7-dien-1-yl)-2-methyl-2H,5H-pyrano[3,2-c]chromen-5-one

(6d). Purification by flash chromatography on silica gel (5% AcOEt-cyclohexane) gave 6d as a mixture of two inseparable (E/Z) diastereoisomers (6/4) under the form of a red oil (288 mg, 79%, 21.6 g.h⁻¹). IR (ATR) *v* 2966, 2916, 2853, 1714, 1642, 1605, 1565, 1361, 1033 cm⁻¹. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 400 MHz) δ (ppm) 7.76-7.82 (m, 1H), 7.48-7.54 (m, 1H), 7.25-7.31 (m, 2H), 6.58 (d, 1H, *J* = 10.0 Hz), 5.48 (d, 1H × 0.6, *J* = 10.1 Hz), 5.47 (d, 1H × 0.4, *J* = 10.1 Hz), 5.09-5.13 (m, 1H), 5.05-5.07 (m, 1H), 2.11-2.18 (m, 2H), 1.96-2.05 (m, 3H), 1.83-1.94 (m, 2H), 1.72-1.80 (m, 1H), 1.52-1.66 (m, 12H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 100 MHz) δ (ppm) 161.0 (× 0.6), 161.0 (× 0.4), 159.2 (× 1), 153.4 (× 1), 136.2 (× 0.4), 136.1 (× 0.6), 132.2 (× 1), 131.7 (× 0.4), 131.5 (× 0.6), 125.2 (× 0.6), 125.2 (× 0.4), 124.3 (× 0.6), 124.3 (× 0.4), 124.1 (× 0.4), 124.1 (× 0.6), 123.3 (× 0.4), 122.8 (× 0.6), 133.3 (× 0.4), 42.2 (× 0.4), 41.9 (× 0.6), 39.7 (× 1), 32.0 (× 0.4), 27.6 (× 0.6), 26.7 (× 0.6), 26.6 (× 0.4), 25.8 (× 0.4), 25.8 (× 0.6), 23.4 (× 1), 22.6 (× 0.6), 22.4 (× 0.4), 17.8 (× 0.6), 17.7 (× 0.4), 16.1 (× 1). HRMS (ASAP+) *m*/*z* [M + H]⁺ Calcd for C₂₄H₂₉O₃ 365.2117; Found 365.2108.

10,10-dimethyl-9,10,11,11a-tetrahydro-6H,8H-9,11-methanochromeno[4,3-b]chromen-6one (6e). Purification by flash chromatography on silica gel (5% AcOEt-cyclohexane) gave **6e** as a mixture of two inseparable diastereoisomers (≥ 92 : 8) under the form of a yellow oil (244 mg, 83%, 18.3 g.h⁻¹). IR (ATR) *v* 2933, 2867, 1707, 1651, 1603, 1560, 1406, 1038, 747 cm⁻¹. ¹H NMR (CDCl₃, 300 MHz, major diastereoisomers) δ (ppm) 7.79 (dd, 1H, *J* = 1.6, 7.9 Hz), 7.46-7.52 (m, 1H), 7.24-7.32 (m, 2H), 6.24 (d, 1H, *J* = 2.6 Hz), 5.25-5.30 (m, 1H), 2.67-2.79 (m, 2H), 2.38-2.47 (m, 1H), 2.13-2.27 (m, 2H), 1.44 (d, 1H, *J* = 10.5 Hz), 1.32 (s, 3H), 0.9 (s, 3H). ¹³C NMR (CDCl₃, 75 MHz, major diastereoisomer) δ (ppm) 161.3, 159.6, 152.8, 137.3, 131.7, 124.1, 122.7, 116.8, 115.4, 112.0, 104.3, 72.4, 48.9, 42.3, 40.2, 32.0, 25.6, 25.4, 21.9. HRMS (ASAP+) *m/z* [M + H]⁺ Calcd for C₁₉H₁₉O₃ 295.1334; Found 295.1330.











11. References

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