

Supplementary Information

Atomically dispersed Co catalyst for efficient oxidative fabrication of benzoheterocycles under ambient oxygen condition

Jia-Yue Chen, Ke-Ming Li, Yu-Xuan Sun, Yao Xiao, Feng-Shuo Guo, Yao-Bing Huang,* and Qiang Lu*

National Engineering Research Center of New Energy Power Generation, North China Electric Power University, Beijing 102206, P. R. China.

* Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to Y. Huang (hyb123@mail.ustc.edu.cn); Q. Lu (qianglu@ncepu.edu.cn)

General Experimental Details

Chemicals. 2-Methylimidazole (2-MI), cobaltous nitrate hexahydrate ($\text{Co}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$), benzaldehyde, *o*-phenylenediamine, 2-aminophenol, 2-aminobenzenethiol and *m*-xylene were acquired from Shanghai Macklin Biochemical Co., Ltd. Methanol, petroleum ether, ethyl acetate, and zinc nitrate hexahydrate ($\text{Zn}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$) were acquired from Sinopharm Chemical Reagent Co., Ltd.

Preparation of NC. In a typical experiment, 670 mg $\text{Zn}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ was dissolved in 30 mL methanol to form solution 1, and 1980 mg 2-methylimidazole (2-MI) was dissolved in 30 mL methanol to form solution 2. Subsequently, solution 1 was dropwise added to solution 2 under vigorously stirring for 8 h at room temperature. Afterward, the generated ZIF-8 was collected by centrifugation, washed with methanol (three times), and finally dried overnight. The dried ZIF-8 was placed in the porcelain boat and pyrolyzed under 100 mL/min N_2 flow at 800 °C for 2 h (3 °C/min).

Preparation of Co/NC catalyst. Typically, 218 mg $\text{Zn}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and 520 mg $\text{Co}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ were dissolved in 30 mL methanol to form solution 1, and 1980 mg 2-MI was dissolved in 30 mL methanol to form solution 2. Subsequently, solution 1 was dropwise added to solution 2 under vigorously stirring for 8 h at room temperature. Afterward, the generated precursor was collected by centrifugation, washed with methanol (three times), and finally dried overnight. The dried precursor was placed in the porcelain boat and pyrolyzed under 100 mL/min N_2 flow at 800 °C for 2 h.

Preparation of Co/SiO₂. 25 mg $\text{Co}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and 670 mg $\text{Zn}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ were

dissolved in 50 mL methanol to form solution 1, and 195 mg fumed silica was dissolved in 50 mL methanol to form solution 2. Subsequently, solution 1 was added to solution 2 under vigorously stirring for 8 h at room temperature. Afterward, the solvent was removed by rotary evaporation, and the obtained solids were dried overnight at 80 °C. Finally, the dried solids were placed in the porcelain boat and pyrolyzed under 100 mL/min N₂ flow at 450 °C for 2 h. The resulting sample was designated as Co/SiO₂.

Characterization. Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) images were characterized by a Hitachi SU8010 field emission scanning electron microscopy. High-resolution transmission electron microscopy (HR-TEM) and energy-dispersive X-ray (EDX) mapping images were taken by a JEM-2100F electron microscope. Aberration-corrected high angle annular dark-field scanning transmission electron microscopy (AC-HAADF-STEM) images were recorded by an FEI Themis Z. The contents of metal in samples were analyzed by an ICP-OES730 inductively coupled plasma optical emission spectrometer (ICP-OES). X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) characterizations were carried out on the Thermo ESCALAB 250xi. Powder X-ray diffraction (XRD) patterns were obtained from a Brucker D8 advance X-ray diffractometer using Co K α radiation. X-ray absorption fine structure (XAFS) measurements were carried out at the TableXAFS 500A. The N₂ adsorption-desorption tests were obtained from an automated gas sorption analyzer (Quantachrome, Autosorb-Iq-MP, United States). The Brunauer-Emmet-Teller (BET) was used to calculate the specific surface areas, the average pore sizes, and the total pore volumes of the catalysts.

Supplementary Figures

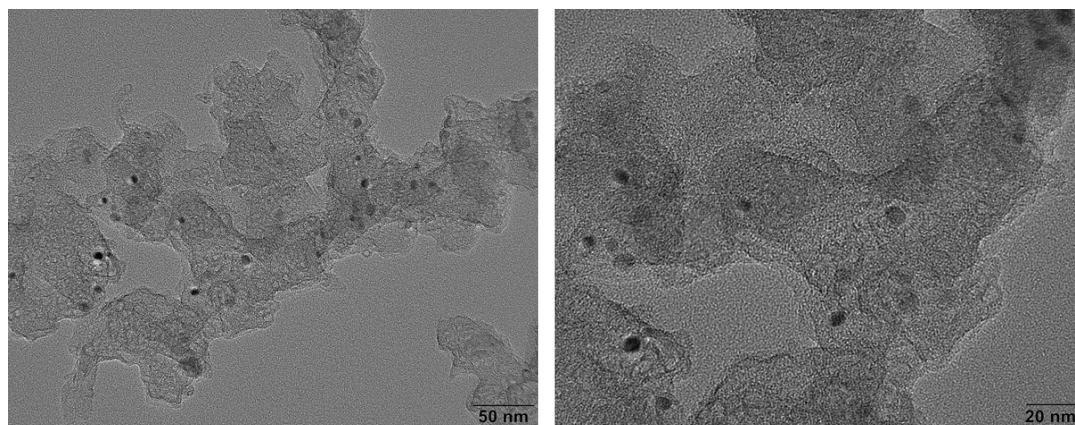


Fig. S1. TEM images of Co/NC.

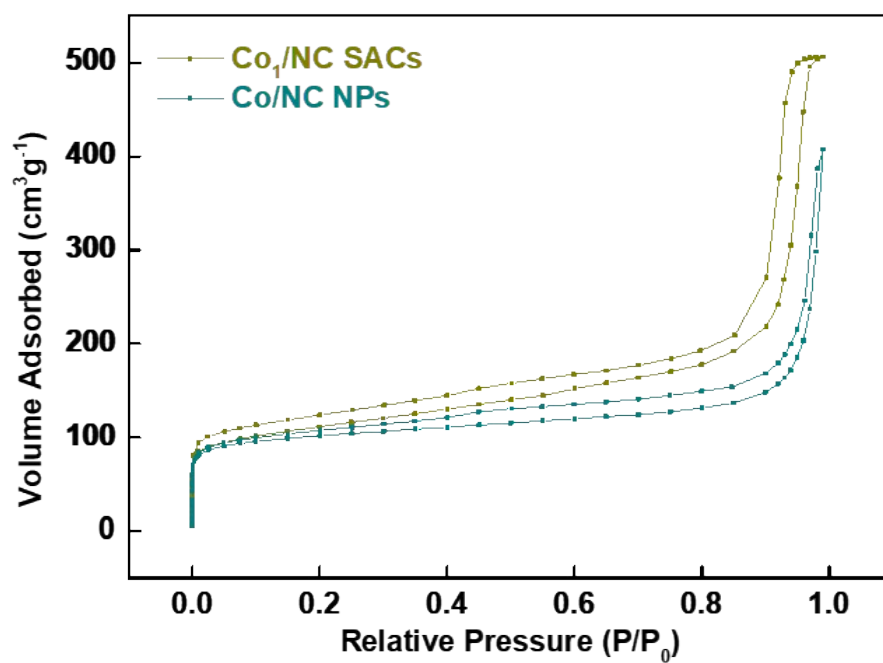


Fig. S2. N₂ adsorption–desorption isotherms of Co₁/NC and Co/NC.

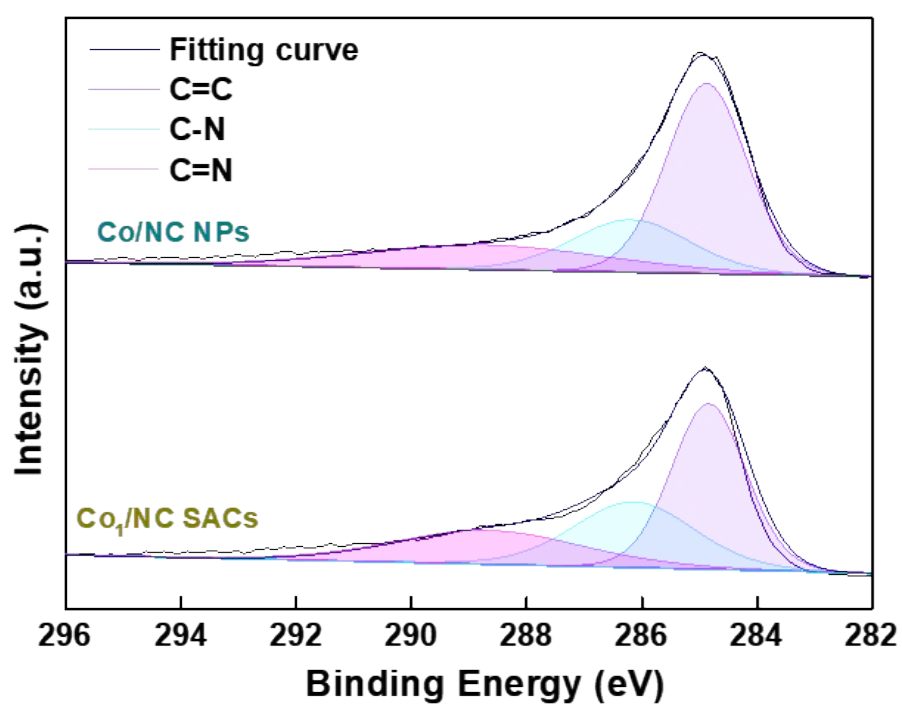


Fig. S3. XPS spectra of C 1s in Co₁/NC and Co/NC catalysts.

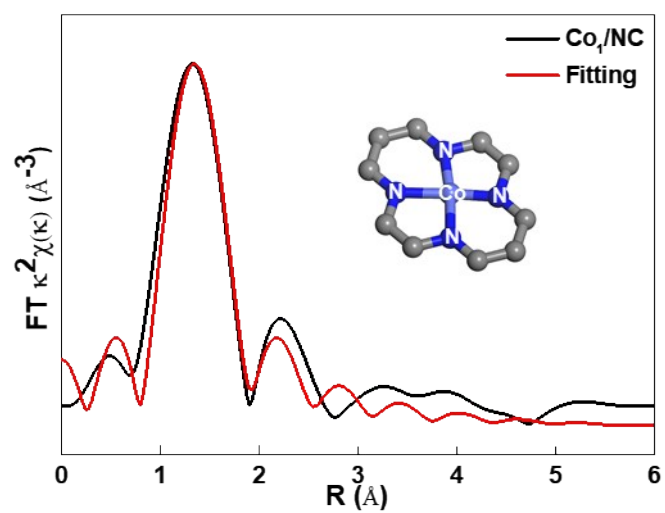


Fig. S4. The corresponding FT-EXAFS fitting curves of Co₁/NC, inset is the view of the fitted structure simulated by density of theory calculation.

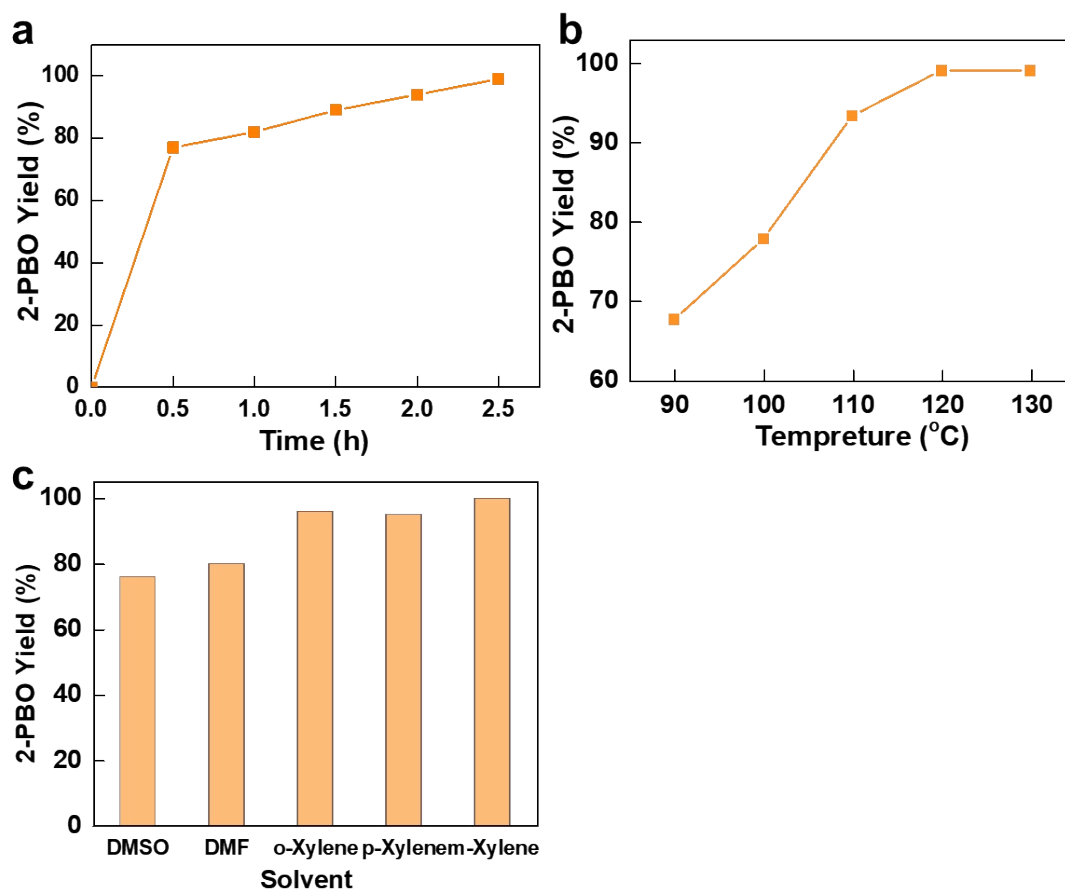


Fig. S5. Influences of (a) time, (b) temperature, and (c) solvents on the oxidative coupling of 2-aminophenol with benzaldehyde to 2-PBO over Co_I/NC catalyst, respectively. Conditions: (a) Firstly, 0.2 mmol 2-aminophenol, 0.2 mmol benzaldehyde, 3 mL *m*-xylene, 120 °C, 1 h; then, 1.38 mol % Co_I/NC, 1 bar O₂, 120 °C, 0.5-2.5 h. (b) Firstly, 0.2 mmol 2-aminophenol, 0.2 mmol benzaldehyde, 3 mL *m*-xylene, 90-130 °C, 1 h; then, 1.38 mol % Co_I/NC, 1 bar O₂, 90-130 °C, 2.5 h. (c) Firstly, 0.2 mmol 2-aminophenol, 0.2 mmol benzaldehyde, 3 mL solvent, 120 °C, 1 h; then, 1.38 mol % Co_I/NC, 1 bar O₂, 120 °C, 2.5 h.

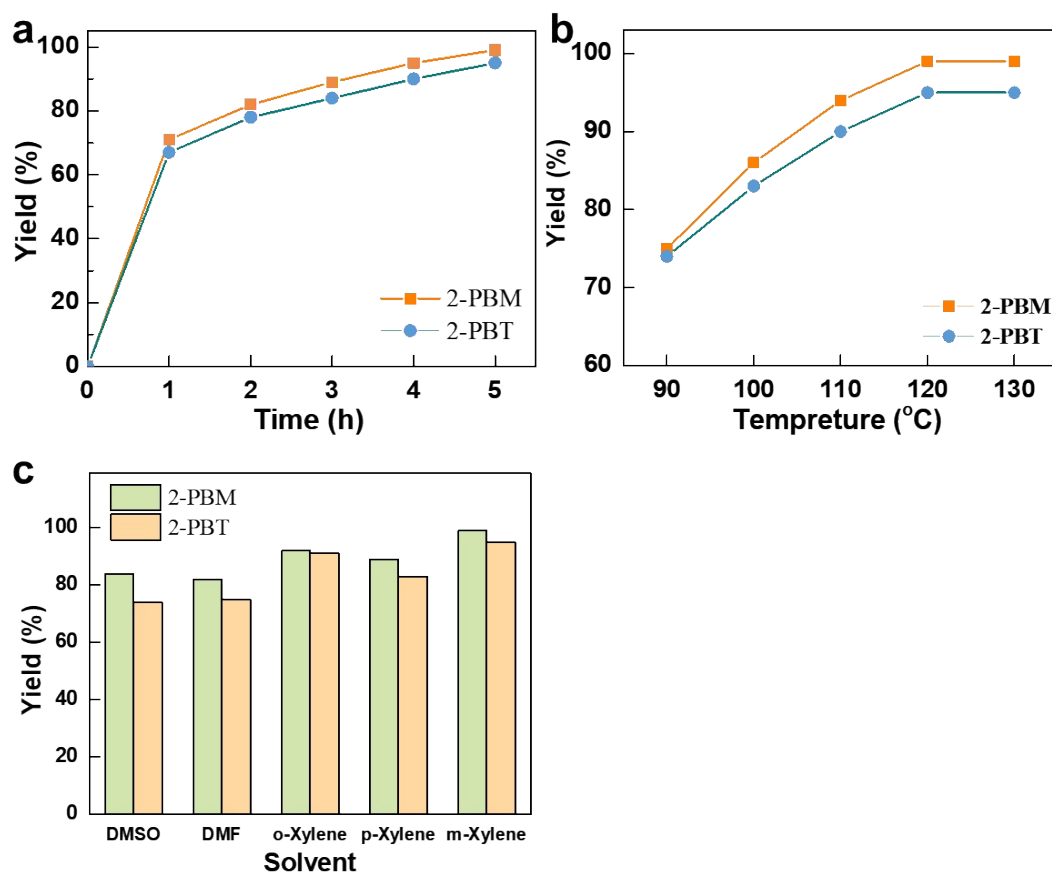


Fig. S6. Influences of (a) time, (b) temperature, and (c) solvents on the oxidative coupling of 2-aminobenzenethiol or *o*-phenylenediamine with benzaldehyde to 2-PBT and 2-PBM over Co_1/NC catalyst, respectively. Conditions: (a) Firstly, 0.2 mmol 2-aminobenzenethiol or *o*-phenylenediamine, 0.2 mmol benzaldehyde, 3 mL *m*-xylene, 120 °C, 1 h; then, 1.38 mol % Co_1/NC , 1 bar O_2 , 120 °C, 1-5 h. (b) Firstly, 0.2 mmol 2-aminobenzenethiol or *o*-phenylenediamine, 0.2 mmol benzaldehyde, 3 mL *m*-xylene, 90-130 °C, 1 h; then, 1.38 mol % Co_1/NC , 1 bar O_2 , 90-130 °C, 5 h. (c) Firstly, 0.2 mmol 2-aminobenzenethiol or *o*-phenylenediamine, 0.2 mmol benzaldehyde, 3 mL solvents, 120 °C, 1 h; then, 1.38 mol % Co_1/NC , 1 bar O_2 , 120 °C, 5 h.

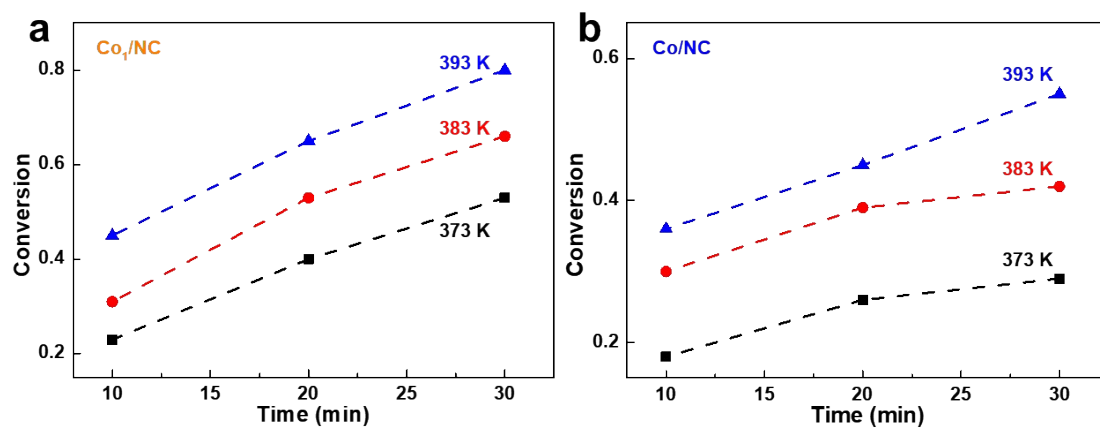


Fig. S7. Oxidation synthesis of 2-PBO over (a) Co_1/NC and (b) Co/NC catalysts under different temperatures. Condition: 0.2 mmol (*E*)-2-(benzylideneamino)phenol, 3 mL *m*-xylene, 30 mg catalysts, 1 bar O_2 .

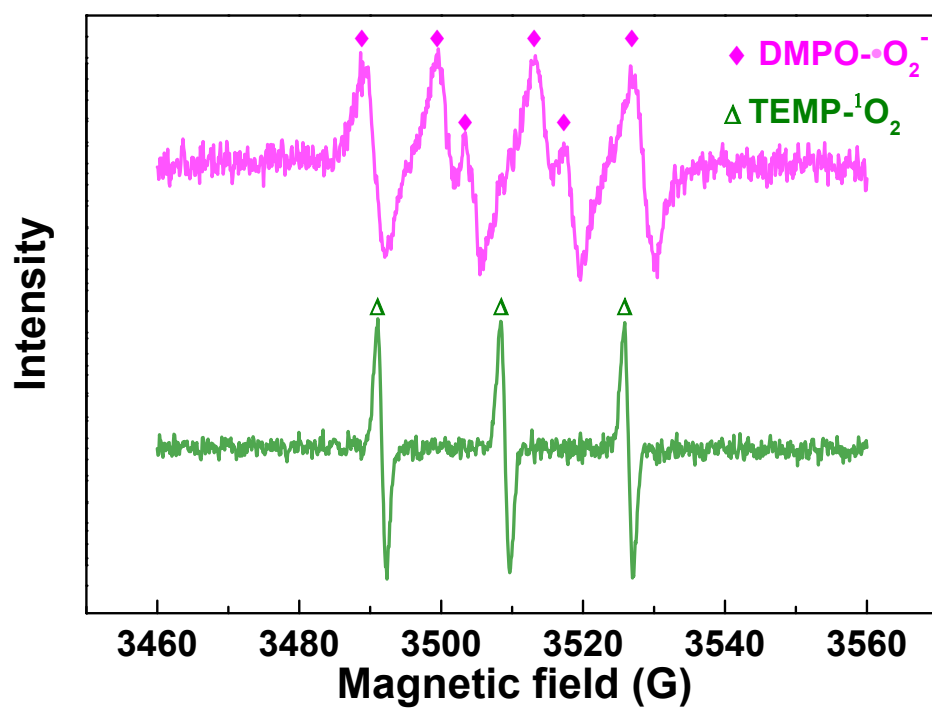


Fig. S8. EPR signals of $\text{TEMP-}^1\text{O}_2$ and $\text{DMPO-}\cdot\text{O}_2^-$ adduct in *m*-xylene in the presence of Co_1/NC at 120 °C in 30 min.

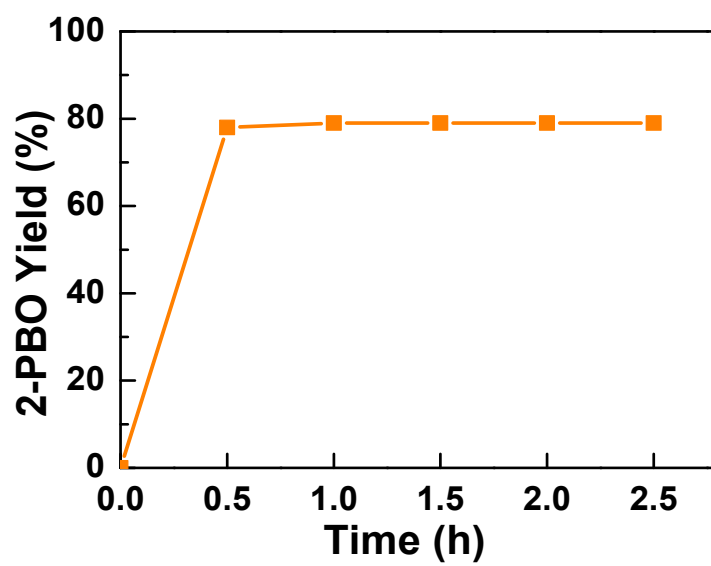


Fig. S9. The hot filtration experiment of Co_I/NC for the oxidation synthesis of 2-PBO.

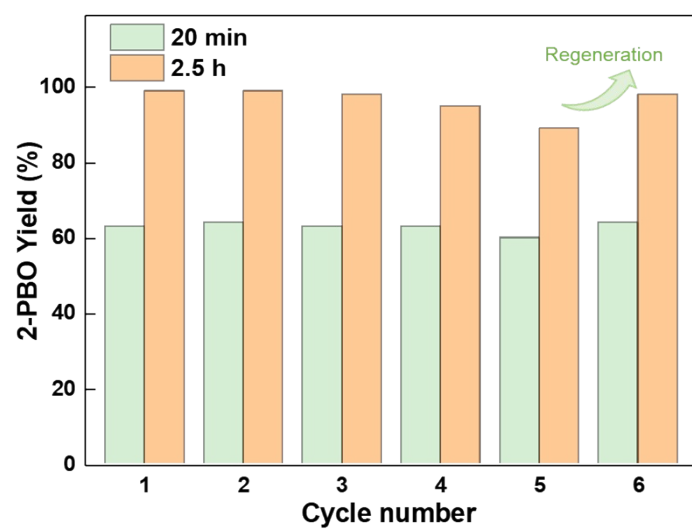


Fig. S10. The reusability of Co₁/NC in the second stage reaction time of the oxidation synthesis of 2-PBO at 20 min and 2.5h, respectively.

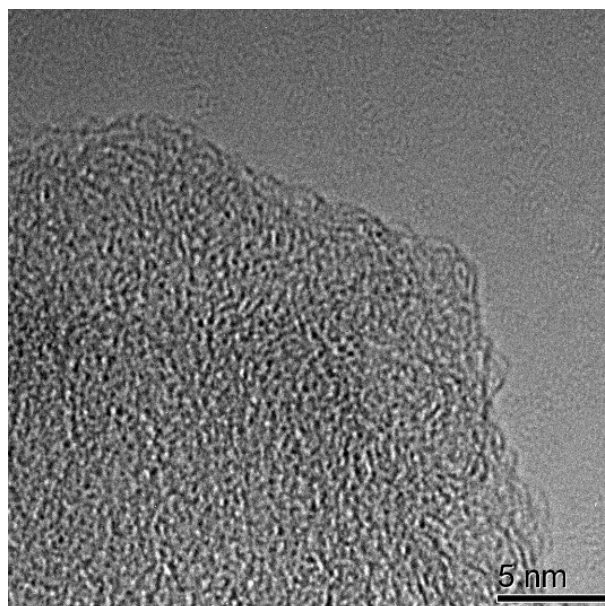


Fig. S11. TEM images of used Co₁/NC catalyst. The second stage reaction time was 2.5 h.

Supplementary Tables

Table S1. ICP-OES results of Co₁/NC and Co/NC catalysts

Sample	Co loading (wt%)
Co ₁ /NC	2.53
Co/NC	20.4
Co ₁ /NC-hot filtration	2.53

Table S2. Physical parameters of Co₁/NC and Co/NC catalysts

Sample	S _{BET} (m ² g ⁻¹)	D _{pore} (nm)	V _p (cm ³ /g)
Co ₁ /NC	401.1	7.83	0.79
Co/NC	381.3	6.23	0.63

Table S3. The best-fitted EXAFS results of Co₁/NC catalysts ^a

Sample	Shell	CN	<i>R</i>(Å)	σ^2 (Å²)	ΔE_0 (eV)	<i>R</i> factor
Co foil	Co-Co	12	2.49±0.01	0.006±0.001	7.8±0.3	0.001
Co ₃ O ₄	Co-O	4	1.91±0.01	0.001±0.002	-7.1±1.7	0.012
	Co-Co	12	3.24±0.03	0.014±0.004	-19.4±3.2	0.020
Co ₁ /NC	Co-N	4.0±0.2	1.88±0.02	0.006±0.004	-4.8±4.0	0.028

^a *CN*: coordination numbers; *R*: bond distance, σ^2 : Debye-Waller factors, and ΔE_0 : the inner potential correction. R factor: goodness of fit.

NMR spectra

