

# Triazabicyclodecene as an Organocatalyst for Regiospecific Synthesis of 1,4,5-Trisubstituted *N*-Vinyl-1,2,3-Triazoles

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**Abstract**: Herein, we have reported the TBD-catalyzed enolatemediated regiospecific synthesis of 1,4,5-trisubstituted *N*-vinyl-1,2,3triazoles from simple activated carbonyls and *N*-vinyl azides via [3+2]cycloaddition, which on further hydrogenation furnished the 1,4,5trisubstituted *N*-alkyl-1,2,3-triazoles. Both organo-click and hydrogenation reactions proceeded in excellent yields with high rate and selectivity within few hours at 25 °C.

1,2,3-Triazoles have emerged as a core of considerable interest for chemists/biologists in the past few decades. This interest stems from their wide applicability in the fields of medicinal, organic, polymer and material chemistry.<sup>[1]</sup> 1,2,3-Triazoles are also capable of playing an important role as "amide isosteres" due to their bio-similarity with amide bonds in properties like relative planarity, dipole moment and amphihydrogen-bonding capability.<sup>[2]</sup> Considering these applications, high-yielding selective synthesis of variety of functionalized 1,2,3-triazoles becomes a challenge for synthetic chemists.

With the advent of the concept of "click chemistry" there has been an explosion in the number of reactions leading to the synthesis of functionalized 1,2,3-triazoles beginning from the copper-catalysed click reaction reported by Sharpless.<sup>[3]</sup> Amino acid- or amine-catalysed [3+2]-cycloaddition entering into this field has given rise to an "organocatalytic click strategy" for the synthesis of substituted 1,2,3-triazoles,<sup>[4-6]</sup> which has proved itself at par and in many cases ahead of similar metal mediated transformations in terms of atom-economy and selectivity (eq. a, Scheme 1).<sup>[4-6]</sup>

The realm of organocatalytic 1,2,3-triazole synthesis initiated by our group in 2008 was further enriched by the groups of Pons-Bressy, Wang, Dehaen, Paixão, Alves, Li and many other groups. In early years, this field witnessed a surge in enamine-mediated 1,2,3-triazole formation from different carbonyl compounds like enones,  $\beta$ -ketoesters, ketones and enals with tosyl/aryl azides.<sup>[4]</sup> In the year 2014, an approach complimentary to the enamine based strategy, an enolate-mediated functionally rich 1,2,3triazole formation was reported by our group (eq. b, Scheme 1).<sup>[5a,b,g,h,I]</sup>

In all the previous organocatalytic reports, though a wide range of activated carbonyls substrates have been employed for the 1,2,3-triazole synthesis, the variability of the reacting partner azide has been limited to simple aryl azides and tosyl azide.

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Supporting information (experimental procedures and analytical data for all new compounds) for this article is given via a link at the end of the document. Present work is an attempt to extend the scope of the azide partner beyond the aryl azides traditionally used in such reactions (Scheme 1). In our search for expanding suitable azide partner, thermal stability versus reactivity of azides was taken as a guiding light (Scheme 1).

a) Enamine-mediated click reaction with aryl azides: Ramachary-Bressy-Wang

$$\underset{R^2}{\overset{O}{\underset{R^2}}} R^1 + N_3 - Ar \qquad \underset{(or) R_2 NH}{\overset{NPH_2}{\underset{R^2}}} \underset{R^2}{\overset{N=N}{\underset{R^1}}} N^{-Ai}$$

b) Enolate-mediated click reaction with aryl azides: Ramachary

$$\begin{array}{c} 0 \\ R^2 \end{array} \stackrel{\text{O}}{\xrightarrow{}} R^1 + N_3 - \text{Ar} \quad \begin{array}{c} \text{DBU} \\ RT \end{array} \stackrel{\text{N} \in \mathbf{N}}{\xrightarrow{}} R^2 \stackrel{\text{N} - \text{Ar}}{\xrightarrow{}} R^1 \end{array}$$

c) Enamine/Enolate-mediated click reaction with alkyl azides: Not known

$$\underset{R^2}{\overset{O}{\underset{}}}_{R^1} + \underset{N_3}{\overset{}}_{R^3} - \underset{(or) \text{ DBU}}{\overset{RNH_2 (or) R_2NH}{\underset{}}_{R^2} \xrightarrow{\underset{R^1}{\overset{N=N}{\underset{}}}_{R^1}} N^{-R^3}$$

d) Enolate-mediated click reaction with vinyl azides: This work



Scheme 1: Previous work and present reaction design.

Till now these organocatalytic [3+2]-cycloadditions have been limited to thermally stable aryl azides [decomposition temperature 140-170 °C]. Moving towards the thermally less stable azides, the observance of the interplay between reactivity and stability is a worthy goal to pursue. Step towards our vision was initiated by choosing substituted vinyl azides as the click partners (eq. d, Scheme 1).<sup>[7a]</sup> Rationale for this choice has been the fact that vinyl azides are of medium thermal stability [decomposition temperature 60-70 °C] and are more reactive towards such transformations than tosyl, aryl or alkyl azides as shown in Scheme 1. Respective vinyl substituted 1,2,3-triazoles could also occupy major role in medicinal to material chemistry. According to the earlier reports,<sup>[7b-c,4f]</sup> the physicochemical or electronic factors which need to be considered for reactivity were the existence of more number of dipolar mesomeric or resonance structures from the azido moiety with attached group and it has been shown that more the number of dipolar mesomeric or resonance structures more is the reactivity of the azide partner. Due to this doublebond character between  $N^1-N^2$  in  $R-N^1-N^2 \equiv N^3$  is decreased by introducing an acyl, ester or sulfonyl group in conjugation with the triazo group. Therefore acyl or sulfonyl azides are less stable than alkyl/aryl azides. This factor renders aliphatic azides though

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thermally highly stable, less reactive in these [3+2]-cycloaddition reactions. A fine balance of electronic and thermal factors is achieved in choosing vinyl azides as click partners. If such a transformation could be achieved this would be a very simple way of introducing an olefinic functionality directly into the 1,2,3-triazole moiety of which previous reports have been scarce.<sup>[8]</sup>

Table 1: Reaction optimization.[a]

[a] Reactions were carried out in solvent (0.5 M) with 1.5 equiv. of 2a relative to

U U U		Catalyst 3 (10 mol%)	_	N <sup>₂N</sup> ,
CO₂Et	$H_3 + N_3 + F$ 1a 2a	Ph Solvent (0.5 M RT, 0.5-3 h	) EtO <sub>2</sub>	C Ph 4aa CH <sub>3</sub>
	со₂н ⟨ ⟩	$\left\langle \begin{array}{c} \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\ \\$		
Ja	3b	3c 3d	3e	3f
Entry	Catalyst 3	Solvent	<i>t</i> [h]	Yield <b>4aa</b> [%] <sup>[b]</sup>
1	3a	DMSO	24	-
2	3b	DMSO	3.0	35
3 <sup>[c]</sup>	3c	DMSO	3.0	-
4	3d	DMSO	3.0	-
5	3e	DMSO	3.0	88
6	3e	DMF	3.0	85
7	3e	CHCl <sub>3</sub>	3.0	11
8	3e	CH <sub>3</sub> CN	3.0	37
9	3f	DMSO	3.0	98
10	K <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub> 3g	DMSO	1.5	83
11	<i>t</i> BuOK <b>3h</b>	DMSO	1.5	84
12	-	DMSO	24	-

the **1a** (0.5 mmol) in the presence of 10-mol% of catalyst **3**. [b] Yield refers to the column-purified product. [c] Ethyl acetoacetate **1a** was consumed totally.

We optimized the designed organo-click reaction by screening simple organocatalysts for the [3+2]-cycloaddition of ethyl acetoacetate 1a with 1.5 equiv. of α-azidostyrene 2a under ambient conditions (Table 1). The reaction of 1a with 1.5 equiv. of  $\alpha$ -azidostyrene **2a** in DMSO under 10-mol% of proline **3a**catalysis did not furnished the expected product 4aa even after 24 h at 25 °C (Table 1, entry 1). The same reaction under 10mol% of diethyl amine 3b-catalysis furnished the 1-vinyl-1H-1,2,3triazole 4aa in only 35% yield with complete consumption of starting materials (Table 1, entry 2). The click reaction of 1a with 1.5 equiv. of 2a in DMSO under 10-mol% of pyrrolidine 3ccatalysis did not furnished the expected product 4aa; but ethyl acetoacetate 1a is consumed totally (Table 1, entry 3). After obtaining discouraging results with the catalysts 3a-c through enamine-mediated reaction,<sup>[4]</sup> we thought of investigating the click reaction through the in situ enolate formation,<sup>[5]</sup> for which we tested some tert-amines 3d-f and base 3g-h as the catalysts for the organo-click reaction. Organo-click reaction of 1a with 2a under 1,4-diazabicyclo[2.2.2]octane (DABCO) 3d-catalysis didn't furnish the expected product 4aa (Table 1, entry 4). Intriguingly, the reaction of 1a with 1.5 equiv. of 2a in DMSO under 10-mol% of 1,8-diazabicyclo[5.4.0]undec-7-ene (DBU) 3e-catalysis at 25 °C for 3.0 h furnished 4aa in 88% yield (Table 1, entry 5).

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Deviating from this condition, by switching the solvent to DMF, CHCl3 or CH3CN by using 10-mol% of DBU 3e as the catalyst was not so successful in promoting the high-yielding click reaction (Table 1, entries 6, 7, and 8).<sup>[51]</sup> These solvent studies clearly support our hypothesis of involvement of reactive enolate formation and their stability. With these moderate results, we thought of using a strong organic base, the commercially available guanidine 1,5,7-triazabicyclo-[4.4.0]dec-5-ene (TBD) 3f as the catalyst for [3+2]-cycloaddition. Because, the pKa value of the conjugate acid of TBD 3f in acetonitrile is close to 26 and also TBD 3f has been applied as a suitable catalyst for a variety of reactions, including Michael, Wittig, Henry, Strecker, transesterification and acyl transfer reactions.<sup>[9]</sup> Fascinatingly, the click reaction of 1a with 1.5 equiv. of 2a in DMSO under 10-mol% of TBD 3f-catalysis at 25 °C for 3.0 h furnished the 1-vinyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole 4aa in 98% yield (Table 1, entry 9). Relatively less basic tert-amines like DABCO [pKa 8.8] 3d, and DBU [pKa 12.0] 3e catalysts furnished the 1-vinyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole 4aa with poor to good yields compared to TBD [pKa 26.0] 3f (Table 1, entries 4 to 9), also no reaction was observed without the catalyst in DMSO for 24 h at 25 °C (Table 1, entry 12). The same click reaction under 10-mol% of non-amine bases K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> [pKa 10.33] 3g and tBuOK [pKa 29.4] 3h-catalysis also furnished the 1-vinyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole 4aa in good yields within 1.5 h at 25 °C; but which is inferior to TBD 3f-catalysis (Table 1, entries 10-11). We finally envisioned the optimized condition to be 25 °C in DMSO under 10-mol% of TBD 3f-catalysis which furnished the 1-vinyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole 4aa in 98% yield from 1a and 2a (Table 1,entry 9).

With the best conditions in hand, the wider scope and the generality of the novel TBD-catalysed click reactions were investigated. A variety of functionalized activated carbonyls such as alkyl acetoacetates 1b-e, ethyl 3-oxo-3-alkyl/aryl-propanoates 1f-k, alkyl/aryl substituted 1,3-diketones 1I-o, 3-oxo-3-alkyl/arylpropanenitriles 1p-r, chiral N-alkyl-3-oxo-3-phenylpropanamide 1s and chiral alkyl 3-oxo-3-phenylpropanoate 1t were reacted with substituted  $\alpha$ -azidostyrenes 2a-g, or ((2azidoallyl)oxy)benzenes 2h-i catalysed by 10-mol% of TBD 3f at 25 °C in DMSO for 0.5-48 h as shown in Table 2. Interestingly, the click reaction of alkyl acetoacetates 1b-e containing different alkyl groups like methyl, allyl, propargyl, and benzyl with  $\alpha$ azidostyrene 2a under 3f-catalysis furnished the expected 1-vinyl-1H-1,2,3-triazoles 4ba-ea in excellent to good yields within 1.0-3.0 h (Table 2). In a similar manner, the TBD 3f-catalyzed click reaction of 2a with ethyl 3-oxo-3-alkyl/aryl-propanoates 1f-k containing ethyl, n-propyl, trifluoromethyl, phenyl, 4-nitrophenyl and 4-methoxyphenyl furnished the expected functionalized 1vinyl-1H-1,2,3-triazoles 4fa-ka in excellent to moderate yields from 2.5-48.0 h (Table 2). Yields of the 1-vinyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole products 4fa-ga were sustained with 93-94%, but the yields slightly decreased by increasing the reaction time with electron withdrawing groups such as trifluoromethyl, phenyl, 4-nitrophenyl and 4-methoxyphenyl compared to methyl group (Table 2). For example, instead of 10 mol% of TBD 3f, 1.2 equiv. of DBUcatalysed click reaction of the ethyl 4,4,4-trifluoro-3-oxobutanoate 1h with 2a in DMSO at 25 °C for 48 h furnished the 1,2,3-triazole 4ha in only 50% yield (Table 2). Click reaction of symmetric 1,3diketones like pentane-2,4-dione 11 and 1,3-diphenylpropane-1,3dione 1m with 2a under 10-mol% of 3f-catalysis furnished the selective products 4la in 77% yield in 2.0 h and 4ma in 70% yield in 7.0 h, respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Substrate scope.[a]





column-purified product. [b] 1.2 equiv. of DBU **3e** was used as catalyst. [c] Reaction performed in neat with 30 mol% of **3f**. [d] Ethyl acetoacetate **1a** was used.

Surprisingly, click reaction of non-symmetrical 1,3-diketones like 1-phenylbutane-1,3-dione **1n** with **2a** under 10-mol% of **3f**catalysis furnished a mixture of two products **4na** in 32% yield and **4'na** in 21% yield in 7.0 h (Table 2). Similarly, reaction of 1phenyl-3-(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)propane-1,3-dione **10** with **2a** under 10-mol% of **3f**-catalysis furnished a mixture of two products **40a** in 21% yield and **4'0a** in 21% yield in 5.5 h (Table 2). Interestingly, the click reaction of 3-oxo-3-phenylpropanenitrile **1p** with **2a** under 10-mol% of **3f**-catalysis for 7.0 h furnished **4pa** in

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82% yield (Table 2). The **3f**-catalyzed organo-click reaction of **2a** with other two  $\beta$ -ketonitriles of 3-oxo-3-(*p*-tolyl)propanenitrile **1q** and 4,4-dimethyl-3-oxopentanenitrile **1r** furnished the expected products **4qa** in 87% yield and **4ra** in 70% yield, respectively (Table 2).

After clear understanding of the electronic factors of activated carbonyls 1 in the [3+2]-cycloaddition reaction, we investigated the reaction scope with different  $\alpha$ -azidostyrenes and  $\alpha$ -azido olefins 2b-i with 1e or 1a in the presence of catalytic amount of TBD 3f at 25 °C (Table 2). In this reaction, α-azidostyrenes 2b-f containing different functional groups of 4-F, 4-Cl, 4-CH<sub>3</sub>, 2-CH<sub>3</sub> and 4-OCH3 were used as substrates along with 1e for the organocatalytic click synthesis of the single isomer of 1,2,3triazoles 4eb-ef in excellent to good yields within 1.0-5.0 h (Table 2). Surprisingly, click reaction of α-azidostyrenes 2d-f containing 4-CH<sub>3</sub>, 2-CH<sub>3</sub> and 4-OCH<sub>3</sub> with 1e under the standard conditions [10-mol% 3f in DMSO at 25 °C] furnished the products 4ed-ef in moderate to poor yields, but the same reaction under 30-mol% of 3f in neat furnished the expected products 4ed-ef in good yields (Table 2). Organo-click reaction of 1e with 2-(1azidovinyl)naphthalene 2g under 3f-catalysis at 25 °C for 4.0 h furnished the expected product 4eg in 80% yield. With applications in mind, we performed the organo-click reaction of 1a or 1e with simple aliphatic  $\alpha$ -azido olefins 2h-i to furnish the expected click products in very good yields within 0.85 h as shown in Table 2. To test the generality of this methodology, we performed few more click reactions by using a-azidostyrenes 2bc containing 4-F and 4-Cl with activated carbonyls of pentane-2,4-dione 11 and 3-oxo-3-phenylpropanenitrile 1p to furnish the click products 4lb, 4lc, 4pb and 4pc in very good yields as shown in Table 2. With preparation of chiral functionalized 1-vinyl-1H-1,2,3-triazoles in mind, we performed the click reaction of (S)methyl 2-(3-oxo-3-phenylpropanamido)-3-phenylpropanoate 1s and (1R,2S,5R)-2-isopropyl-5-methylcyclohexyl 3-oxo-3phenylpropanoate 1t with 2a under 3f-catalysis to furnish the chiral click products (+)-4sa in 87% and (-)-4ta in 80% yield, respectively (Table 2). The results furnished in the Table 2 demonstrate the broad scope of this novel methodology covering a structurally diverse group of activated carbonyls 1a-t and  $\alpha$ azidostyrenes/a-azido-olefins 2a-i. The structure and regiochemistry of the click products 4 were established through NMR analysis and also finally confirmed by the X-ray structure analysis on **4ia** (Figure S1, see the Supporting Information).<sup>[10]</sup>

To further understand the electronic nature of azidostyrenes in the organo-click reaction, we have chosen simple (E)- $\beta$ azidostyrene 5a, which is having linear conjugation (Table 3). Surprisingly, the click reaction of ethyl acetoacetate **1a** with (E)- $\beta$ azidostyrene 5a under TBD 3f-catalysis at 25 °C within 0.1 h furnished the expected 1-styryl-1H-1,2,3-triazole 6aa in 80% yield (Table 3, entry 1). Likewise, the click reaction of propargyl acetoacetate 1d and benzyl acetoacetate 1e with (E)- $\beta$ azidostyrene 5a under TBD 3f-catalysis furnished the 1-styryl-1H-1,2,3-triazoles 6da and 6ea in 85% yield within 0.75 h, respectively (Table 3, entries 2 and 3). We have also tested six more examples of functionalized activated carbonyls 1h-r for the organo-click reaction with (E)- $\beta$ -azidostyrene 5a, which furnished the expected substituted 1-styryl-1H-1,2,3-triazoles 6ha-6ra in good to excellent yields (Table 3, entries 4-9). Key point to mention here in all the above nine click reactions is that the reaction rates are very high with shorter times compared to  $\alpha$ azidostyrene 2a. The observed high reactivity of 5a compared to 2a in the [3+2]-cycloaddition is mainly due to their differences in conjugation like linear versus cross; because polarizability in 5a is

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more compared to **2a**, which is inducing the quick reaction with in situ generated enolates.

#### Table 3: Vinyl azide scope.[a]

[a] Reactions were carried out in DMSO (0.5 M) with 1.5 equiv. of 5a relative to



the **1** (0.5 mmol) in the presence of 10-mol% of **3f** and yield refers to the column-purified product. [b] 1.2 equiv. of DBU **3e** was used as catalyst.

The versatility of the organo-click reaction was further exemplified by synthesizing a few useful compounds 71a, 8aa, 9aa, 10ea and 10la (Scheme 2). We explored the utilization of 4 bearing 1,2,3-triazole-Ac in the synthesis of aldol product 7 via enolate-mediated aldol reaction (Scheme 2). Direct DBUcatalysed aldol reaction of 1-(5-methyl-1-(1-phenylvinyl)-1H-1,2,3triazol-4-yl)ethanone 4la with 0.7 equiv. of 4-nitrobenzaldehyde in DMSO at 80 °C for 12 h furnished the aldol product 71a in 50% yield (Scheme 2). Aldol products containing the 1,2,3-triazole ring will be promising probes to study the medicinal and material properties.<sup>[2]</sup> As shown in Scheme 2, ethyl 1-(1,2-dibromo-1phenylethyl)-5-methyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole-4-carboxylate 8aa was synthesized in good yield from the treatment of 1.2 equiv. of bromine with 1-vinyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole 4aa in DCM at 0-25 °C for 2 h; which on further treatment with 1.0 equiv. of triethylamine in CHCl<sub>3</sub> at 0-25 °C for 21 h furnished the synthetically useful triazole-based vinylbromide 9aa in 40% yield along with fully debrominated product 4aa in 40% yield through elimination of bromine (Scheme 2). Further, we synthesized the N-alkyl substituted 1,2,3-triazoles 10ea and 10la through hydrogenation reaction of fully substituted 1-vinyl-1H-1,2,3-triazole 4ea and 1styryl-1H-1,2,3-triazole 6la using hydrogen balloon under 10mol% of Pd/C in methanol at 25 °C for 1 h. In a single step, compound of 5-methyl-1-(1-phenylethyl)-1H-1,2,3-triazole-4carboxylic acid 10ea was isolated in 90% yield and 1-(5-methyl-1phenethyl-1H-1,2,3-triazol-4-yl)ethanone 10la was isolated in 85% yield (Scheme 2). These results highlights advantages of the organo-click reactions, which enables a quick synthesis of N-alkyl substituted 1,2,3-triazoles.

Scheme 2: Reaction application



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In order to further extend the understanding of catalytic power of TBD 3f and also electronic nature of vinyl-azides 2/5, we have done a few controlled experiments as shown in Scheme 3. Surprisingly, there is no triazole 12 formation from the reaction of ethyl acetoacetate 1a with benzyl azide 11 under TBD 3fcatalysis at 25 to 60 °C even after 12 h (Scheme 3). At the same time, the click reaction of ethyl acetoacetate 1a with phenyl azide 13 under TBD 3f-catalysis in DMSO at 25 °C within 1.0 h furnished the single isomer of 1,2,3-triazole 14 in 99% yield (Scheme 3). The same product 14 was synthesised by Wang et al in 91% vield under enamine-catalysis by using 20 mol% of diethyl amine **3b** in DMSO at 70 °C in 24 h.<sup>[4c]</sup> which is rationally inferior to the present enolate-catalysis. Many of the products 4/6 yields/selectivity obtained were excellent through enolateintermediate compared to the previous methods and vinyl-azides reactivity towards enolates was similar to the aryl azides than aliphatic azides.



Scheme 3: Controlled experiments

The mechanism for the selective synthesis of **4/6** through the reaction of **1**, **2/5** and **3f** is illustrated in Scheme 4.<sup>[51]</sup> Reaction of the catalyst TBD **3f** ( $pK_a$  = 26.03 in CH<sub>3</sub>CN) with activated carbonyls **1** generates the enolate **15**, which on in situ treatment with reactive vinyl-N<sub>3</sub> **2/5** furnishes selectively the functionalized 1,2,3-triazolines **16** via concerted [3+2]-cycloaddition or stepwise amination-cyclization reaction, which further transforms into the

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stable 1,2,3-triazole **4/6** through rapid elimination of water induced by the basic nature of **3f**.



Scheme 4: Reaction mechanism.

In summary, for the first time we have developed the TBDcatalyzed regiospecific synthesis of 1,4,5-trisubstituted *N*-vinyl-1,2,3-triazoles **4/6** from simple activated carbonyls **1** and *N*-vinyl azides **2/5** via [3+2]-cycloaddition reaction. The click reaction proceeds in excellent yields with high rate and selectivity using TBD **3f** as the organocatalyst within a few hours at 25 °C. Further work is in progress to develop the application of these products in medicinal to material chemistry.

#### **Experimental Section**

Experimental procedures, and compound characterization data ( $^{1}$ H NMR,  $^{13}$ C NMR, and HRMS). This material is available free of charge in the Supporting Information.

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N-Vinyl-1,2,3-Triazoles (OR) Organocatalytic Click Reactions

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Triazabicyclodecene as an Organocatalyst for Regiospecific Synthesis of 1,4,5-Trisubstituted *N*-Vinyl-1,2,3-Triazoles



**Simple organocatalyst, TBD-catalysed an enolate-mediated** vinyl azide–carbonyl [3+2]-cycloaddition of various activated carbonyls with vinyl azides to furnish the functionally rich *N*-vinyl-1,2,3-triazoles.