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## A Density Functional Theory Study of Formic Acid Formation from CO<sub>2</sub> Hydrogenation over Au-exchanged MCM-22 Zeolite

One of the important goals in energy and environmental research is to find novel materials to sequester and convert greenhouse gases to useful chemicals. In this study, the well calibrated Density Functional Theory (DFT) is used to study the adsorption of CO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> in order to investigate possible reaction pathways for CO<sub>2</sub> hydrogenation to formic acid over gold supported MCM-22 zeolite catalyst. The adsorption energies of CO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> on Au-MCM-22 catalyst are -15.2 and -30.4 kcal/mol, respectively. From the order of adsorption, two possible reaction mechanisms are proposed. The first mechanism, hydrogen molecule is first adsorbed on gold and zeolite, resulting in acid hydride and Brønsted acid site of zeolite. Formic acid is consecutively formed via the protonation of CO<sub>2</sub> over the Brønsted acid and simultaneous formation of the bond between CO<sub>2</sub> and the hydride group. The activation energy of the rate determining step of this pathway is 39.5 kcal/mol. In the second mechanism, CO<sub>2</sub> is primarily interacted over the active site. The hydrogen is co-adsorbed and reacted with CO<sub>2</sub> to produce intermediate adsorbing on Au. The activation energy of this step is 40.5 kcal/mol. The hydrogen transfer to HCOO intermediate to generate formic acid is proposed in the last step. Due to these comparable pathways at least at high temperature, both the reaction mechanisms could therefore be possible, depending on the order of adsorption. Accordingly, the gold-exchanged MCM-22 zeolite could be potentially used as the catalyst for producing formic acid from CO<sub>2</sub> and hydrogen molecules.

**Primary author:** Dr SANGTHONG, Winyoo (NANOTEC Center for Nanoscale Materials Design for Green Nanotechnology and Center for Advanced Studies in Nanotechnology for Chemical, Food and Agricultural Industries, Kasetsart University, Bangkok 10900, Thailand)

**Presenter:** Dr SANGTHONG, Winyoo (NANOTEC Center for Nanoscale Materials Design for Green Nanotechnology and Center for Advanced Studies in Nanotechnology for Chemical, Food and Agricultural Industries, Kasetsart University, Bangkok 10900, Thailand)

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