

Project 3.7 Activation of dinitrogen by multinuclear Iron complexes supported by sterically demanding N,N-ligands

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Background:

A persistent challenge in chemistry is to activate and functionalize atmospheric N₂ molecules. The utilization of this abundant molecule for the synthesis of N-containing valuable products typically requires a prior activation of an N₂ molecule at a redox-active metal center. In biological nitrogen fixation, Nature uses metalloenzyme systems called nitrogenases, among which the most efficient contains a multinuclear molybdenum-iron cofactor, but systems involving iron–vanadium and iron-only cofactors are also known. These chemical transformations by nitrogenases represent biological equivalents to the industrial, where heterogeneous iron or ruthenium catalysts are used in order to convert N₂ and H₂ to NH₃. Hence, both the coordination chemistry of N₂ species and the search for processes that involve a homogeneous catalyst for the utilization of N₂ as a feedstock to generate higher-value organonitrogen materials are continually one of the greatest challenges facing chemists. The proposed project is focused on designing new reaction systems based on multinuclear low-valent iron complexes tailored with ligands featuring monoanionic N,N-binding sites for fundamental studies of the N₂ activation and transformations.

Aim:

The project aims to design, synthesis, and structural characterization of new iron complexes supported by ligands featuring monoanionic N,N-binding sites. Next, the developed coordination systems will be utilized for the N₂ activation and reduction in the presence of various reducing agents. Modification of the N,N-binding sites will affect the nuclearity of molecular systems and spatial distribution of metal centers, which will shed new light on the cooperativity and synergic effects of multiple metal centers in the N₂ activation processes.

Requirements:

- MSc degree in chemistry, physics or related science fields,
- fluency in English in writing and speech
- basic experience in inorganic synthetic methods and characterization of materials (e.g. NMR, PXRD, IR, MS, UV-Vis, Mössbauer spectroscopy)