

# Supporting information

## Highly Active and Stable Metal Single-Atom Catalysts Achieved by Strong Electronic Metal-Support Interactions

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## Experimental section

### 1. Catalyst synthesis

**Support materials.**  $\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4$  (metals basis, 99%) and  $\text{ZrO}_2$  (metals basis, 99%) were purchased from Alfa Aesar and used without further treatments. The graphene support was prepared through the thermal reduction of graphene oxide. The detailed procedure can be found in our previous work.<sup>1</sup>

$\text{CeO}_2$  nanorods were synthesized by the template-free hydrothermal method.<sup>2</sup> Typically, 1.73 g  $\text{Ce}(\text{NO}_3)_3 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (Sinopharm Chemical Reagent Co., Ltd AR grade) and 19.2 g NaOH (Sinopharm Chemical Reagent Co., Ltd AR grade) were dissolved in 10 and 70 mL ultrapure water, respectively. Next, the  $\text{Ce}(\text{NO}_3)_3$  and NaOH solutions were transferred to a constant pressure drop funnel and three neck flask, respectively. Ar gas (99.999%, Nanjing Special Gases) was introduced for a few minutes to replace the air. Next, the  $\text{Ce}(\text{NO}_3)_3$  solution was added to the NaOH solution rapidly with stirring to get a milk white slurry. The slurry was transferred to a 100 mL Teflon bottle quickly to perform the hydrothermal treatment at 100 °C for 24 h. Next, fresh white precipitates were separated by centrifugation, and washed by ultrapure water 5 times. The resulting materials was further dried at 60 °C in air overnight to the  $\text{CeO}_2$  nanorods.

#### **Synthesis of $\text{Pt}_1/\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4$ , $\text{Pt}_1/\text{CeO}_2$ , $\text{Pt}_1/\text{ZrO}_2$ and $\text{Pt}_1/\text{graphene}$ single-atom catalysts.**

Pt ALD was carried out on a viscous flow reactor (GEMSTAR-6™ Benchtop ALD, Arradiance) by exposing to trimethyl (methylcyclopentadienyl)-platinum (IV) ( $\text{MeCpPtMe}_3$ , Sigma-Aldrich, 98%) at 80, 150, 120 and 250 °C for  $\text{Pt}_1/\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4$ ,  $\text{Pt}_1/\text{CeO}_2$ ,  $\text{Pt}_1/\text{ZrO}_2$  and  $\text{Pt}_1/\text{graphene}$ , respectively. Ultrahigh purity  $\text{N}_2$  (99.999%, Nanjing Special Gases) was used as a carrier gas at a flow rate of 200 mL/min. The Pt precursor was heated to 65 °C to get sufficient vapor pressure and the reactor inlets were heated to 80 °C to avoid any condensation. The support was loaded into the ALD reactor. After temperature stabilization, one cycle of Pt ALD was conducted to prepare the Pt SACs. Here ozone was used to burn off the  $\text{MeCpPtMe}_3$  precursor ligand for synthesis of  $\text{Pt}_1/\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4$ ,  $\text{Pt}_1/\text{CeO}_2$ , and  $\text{Pt}_1/\text{ZrO}_2$  SACs. While oxygen was used as the oxidant for synthesis of  $\text{Pt}_1/\text{graphene}$ . The timing sequence was 200, 250, 100, and 150 sec for the

MeCpPtMe<sub>3</sub> exposure, N<sub>2</sub> purge, O<sub>2</sub> (or O<sub>3</sub>) exposure, and N<sub>2</sub> purge, respectively.

**Synthesis of Pt-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>.** To obtain Pt NPs on the Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> support, Pt ALD was carried out at 300 °C for two cycles by alternatively exposing to MeCpPtMe<sub>3</sub> and O<sub>2</sub>. The timing sequence was 200, 250, 100, and 150 sec for the MeCpPtMe<sub>3</sub> exposure, N<sub>2</sub> purge, O<sub>2</sub> exposure, and N<sub>2</sub> purge, respectively.

**Synthesis of Pt/SiO<sub>2</sub> and Pt/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.** Pt/SiO<sub>2</sub> and Pt/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> were also synthesized through a wet-impregnation method for a comparison.<sup>3</sup> Typically, 100 mg SiO<sub>2</sub> or Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> support was slowly added into a 1.9×10<sup>-2</sup> M H<sub>2</sub>PtCl<sub>6</sub> aqueous solution (0.9 mL). Then, the mixture was stirred for 30 min, and dried in air at room temperature for 12 h. The dried material was first calcined in air at 120 °C for 12 h, and then reduced in 10% H<sub>2</sub> in argon at 300 °C for another 2 h at a flow rate of 60 mL/min to get the Pt/SiO<sub>2</sub> and Pt/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> samples.

#### **Synthesis of Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> and Pd-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>.**

Pd ALD was performed at 200 °C, using palladium hexafluoroacetylacetate (Pd(hfac)<sub>2</sub>, (Sigma-Aldrich, 99.9%) and formalin (Aldrich, 37% HCHO and 15% CH<sub>3</sub>OH in aqueous solution).<sup>4</sup> The Pd precursor and the inlets were heated to 65 and 115 °C. The Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was synthesized by performing one cycle of Pd ALD. The timing sequence was 180, 200, 60 and 200 sec for Pd(hfac)<sub>2</sub> exposure, N<sub>2</sub> purge, formalin exposure and N<sub>2</sub> purge, respectively. The Pd nanoparticle sample of Pd-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was synthesized by using the same time sequence for four cycles.

## **2. Catalyst characterization**

The Pt or Pd loadings on catalysts were determined by an inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectrometer (ICP-AES). All samples were dissolved in hot fresh aqua regia for ICP-AES testing.

The morphology of catalysts was characterized on an aberration-corrected HAADF-STEM instrument at 200 kV (JEOL-2010F, University of Science and Technology of China) and transmission electron microscopy (TEM, JEOL-2010) at 200 kV.

X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS) measurements were taken on a Thermo-VG Scientific Escalab 250 spectrometer, equipped with an aluminum anode (Al K $\alpha$  = 1486.6 eV) (Hefei University of Technology).

Diffuse reflectance infrared Fourier transform spectroscopy (DRIFTS) CO chemisorption measurements were performed on a Nicolet iS10 spectrometer equipped with an MCT detector and a low temperature reaction cell (Praying Mantis Harrick). The sample was first pretreated in 10% O<sub>2</sub> in Ar at 150 °C to remove any contaminant. After cooling the sample to room temperature under Ar, a background spectrum was collected. Then the sample was exposed to 10% CO in Ar at a flow rate of 20 mL/min for about 30 min until saturation. Next, Ar (99.999%) was introduced at a flow rate of 20 mL/min for another 30 min to remove the gas phase CO and then the DRIFT spectrum was collected with 256 scans at a resolution of 4 cm<sup>-1</sup>.

X-ray absorption spectroscopy (XAS) measurements at the Pt L<sub>3</sub>-edge (11564 eV) were performed in the transmission mode with the Si (111) monochromator at the BL14W1 beamline of the Shanghai Synchrotron Radiation Facility (SSRF), China. The storage ring of SSRF worked at 3.5 GeV with a maximum current of 210 mA.

Hydrogen temperature-programmed reduction (H<sub>2</sub> -TPR) was performed on a Micromeritics Autochem II 2920 instrument. Each sample was first pretreated in 10% O<sub>2</sub> in Ar at 200 °C for 60 min. Next, the sample was cooled to 0 °C in Ar and wait for 30 min until the baseline became stable. TPR was performed by heating the sample at 10 °C/min up to 550 °C in 10% H<sub>2</sub> in Ar and a cooled trap with an isopropyl alcohol/liquid nitrogen slurry at -80 °C was used before the TCD detector to retain the produced water.

### **3. Catalytic testing**

Hydrolytic dehydrogenation of ammonia borane was conducted in a home-made gas generation setup, which can be found elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> The hydrolytic dehydrogenation of ammonia borane (AB, Aldrich 97%) was kept in a three-necked round bottom flask at 25 °C under atmospheric pressure. 10 mg of the Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> or Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> catalyst was used, while the weight of other catalysts was adjusted to keep the same amount of metal

content. Typically, 5 mL aqueous AB solution ( $6.5 \times 10^{-2}$  M) was introduced into the glass container via a syringe. The AB solution and the catalyst were well-mixed by using a magnetic stirrer and vigorously stirred with a magnetic stirrer during the reaction. The generated volume of H<sub>2</sub> was measured by a water-filled gas burette.

The specific rates ( $r$ ) of these catalysts were calculated according to the Eq. (1):

$$r = \frac{n_{\text{gas}}}{n_{\text{metal}}} \cdot \frac{1}{t} \quad (1)$$

Here  $n_{\text{gas}}$  is the mole of generated H<sub>2</sub>, while  $n_{\text{metal}}$  is the total mole of Pt or Pd in the sample.  $t$  is the reaction time in min.

According to the durability test, another equivalent amount of AB was added into the three-necked flask after the hydrogen generation reaction was completed. Then the generated volume of H<sub>2</sub> by the water-filled gas burette with reaction time was recorded. Similar operations were repeated for 15 times.

For kinetic studies, the hydrolytic dehydrogenation of AB reaction was also carried out at 30, 35 and 40 °C, in order to obtain the activation energy ( $E_a$ ).

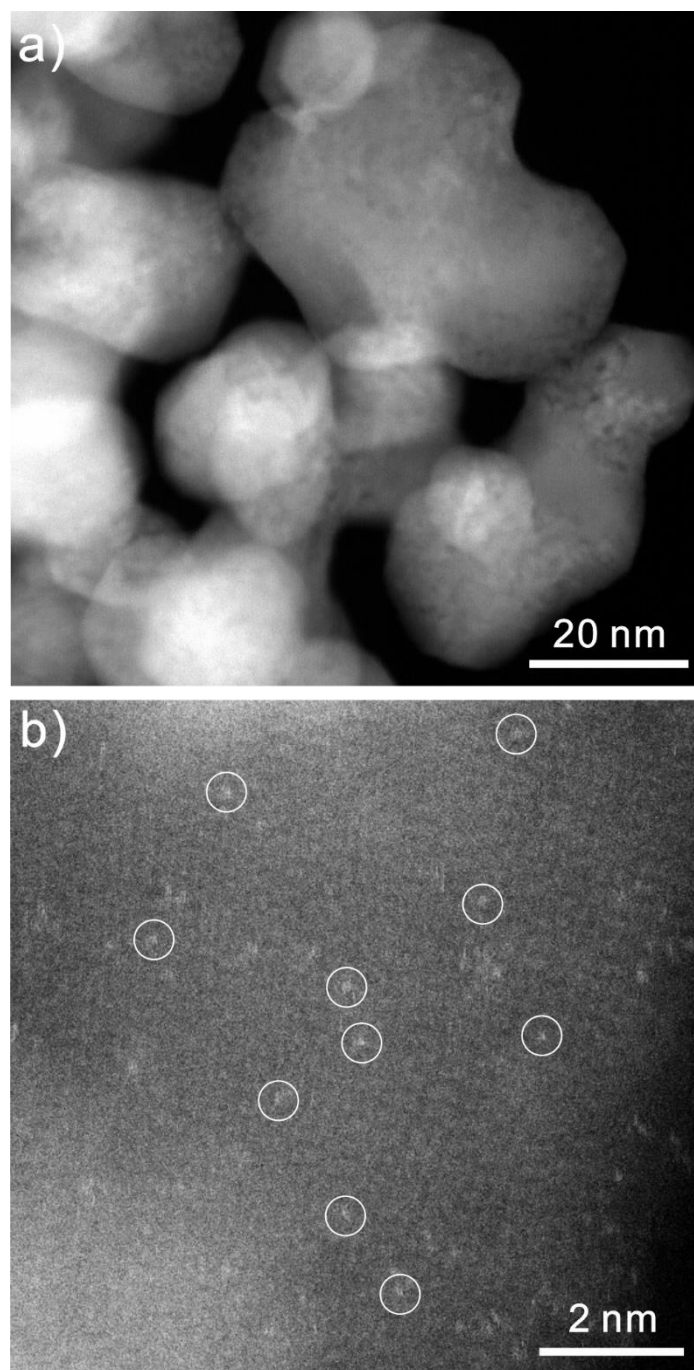
Selective hydrogenation of 1,3-butadiene was performed in a fixed-bed quartz tube reactor at an atmospheric pressure. The feed gas consists of 2.0 % 1,3 butadiene, 4.0 % H<sub>2</sub> with Ar as balance gas. The total flow rate was kept at 25 mL/min. 75 mg Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> catalyst was used, while the amount of other catalysts was adjusted to keep the same Pt content. All catalysts were diluted with 1 g of 60-80 mesh quartz chips. Prior to the reaction test, all catalysts were first calcined in 10% O<sub>2</sub> in Ar for 1 h. The reaction products were analyzed using an online gas chromatography equipped with a flame ionization detector and a capillary column (ValcoPLOT VP-Alumina, 50 m x 0.53 mm) after stabilizing in the feed gas for 2 h. Next, the 1,3-butadiene conversion on all these catalysts was increased by increasing the reaction temperatures.

#### 4. DFT calculations

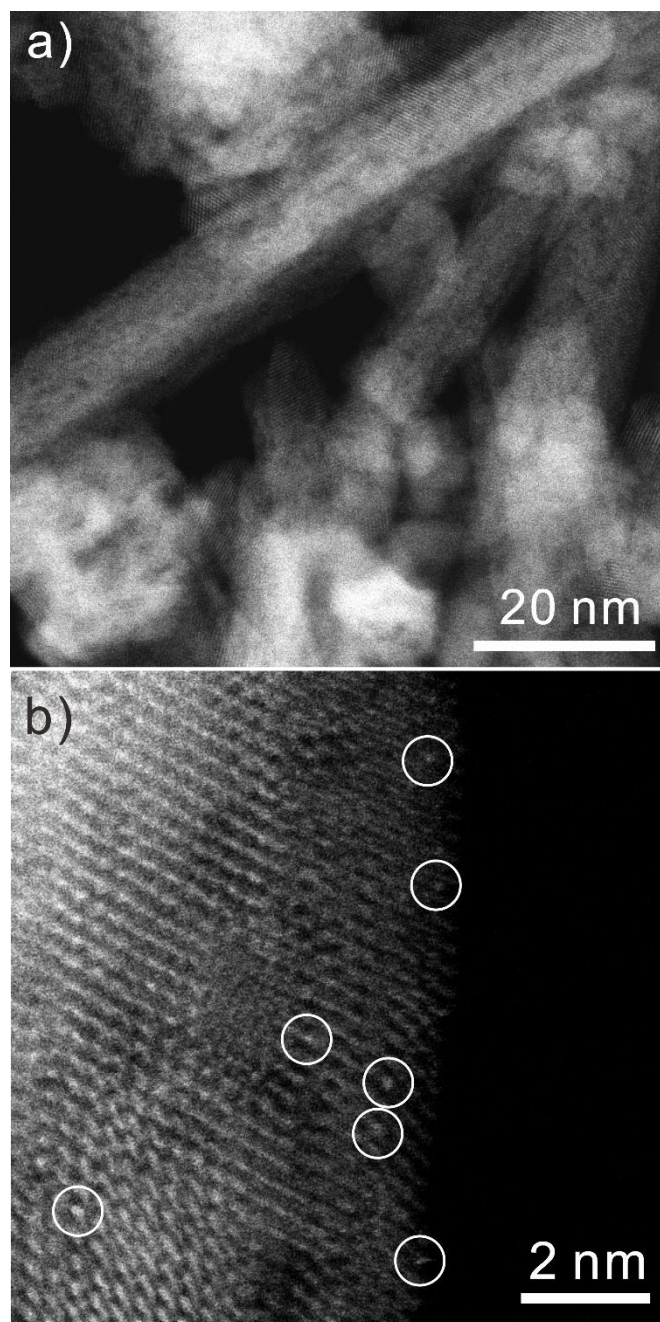
All the calculations were performed by spin-polarized density functional theory (DFT) as implemented in the Vienna ab initio simulation package (VASP).<sup>6</sup> The exchange–correlation interaction is described by the generalized gradient

approximation (GGA) with the Perdew–Burke–Ernzerhof (PBE) functional.<sup>7</sup> A kinetic cutoff energy of 400 eV was applied for plane wave expansions. The convergence criteria for the total energy and the forces were set as  $10^{-5}$  eV and  $0.02$  eV  $\text{\AA}^{-1}$ , respectively. DFT+U corrections<sup>8</sup> with  $U_{\text{eff}} = 3.5, 5.0$  and  $4.0$  eV<sup>9</sup> were applied for Co  $3d$ -orbitals, Ce  $4f$ -orbitals and Zr  $3d$ -orbitals, respectively.

The adsorption energy is calculated by the formula:  $E_{\text{ad}} = E_{(\text{adsorbate/catalyst})} - (E_{\text{catalyst}} + E_{\text{adsorbate}})$ , where  $E_{(\text{adsorbate/catalyst})}$ ,  $E_{\text{catalyst}}$  and  $E_{\text{adsorbate}}$  are the total energies of specie AB (or H<sub>2</sub>) adsorbed on the surface, the bare surface and the gas phase molecule AB (or H<sub>2</sub>) in its ground state, respectively. The binding energy ( $E_{\text{BE}}$ ) of Pt<sub>1</sub> on various metal oxides are calculated as  $E_{\text{BE}} = E_{\text{Pt}_1/\text{MO}} - E_{\text{Pt}_1} - E_{\text{V-MO}}$ , where  $E_{\text{Pt}_1/\text{MO}}$ ,  $E_{\text{Pt}_1}$  and  $E_{\text{V-MO}}$  are the energies of Pt<sub>1</sub> anchored by metal oxides, single Pt<sub>1</sub> atom and metal oxides with Pt<sub>1</sub> atom removed, respectively.

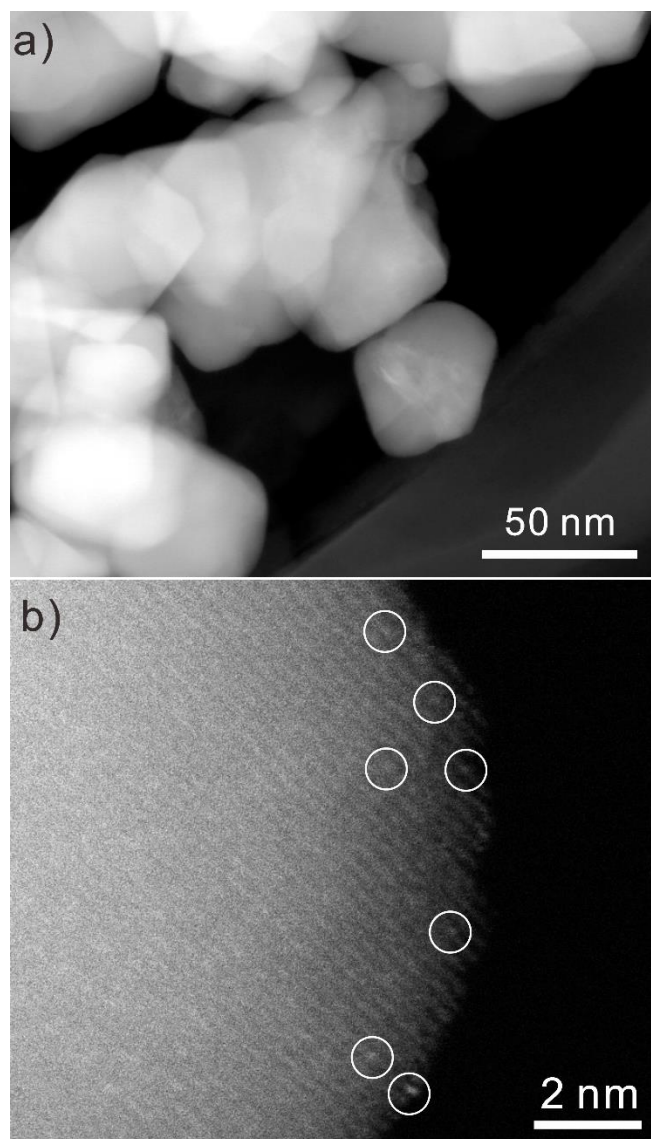


**Figure S1.** Representative HAADF-STEM images of Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> at (a) low- and (b) high-magnifications at other locations. Representative Pt<sub>1</sub> single atoms in (b) are highlighted by the white circles.

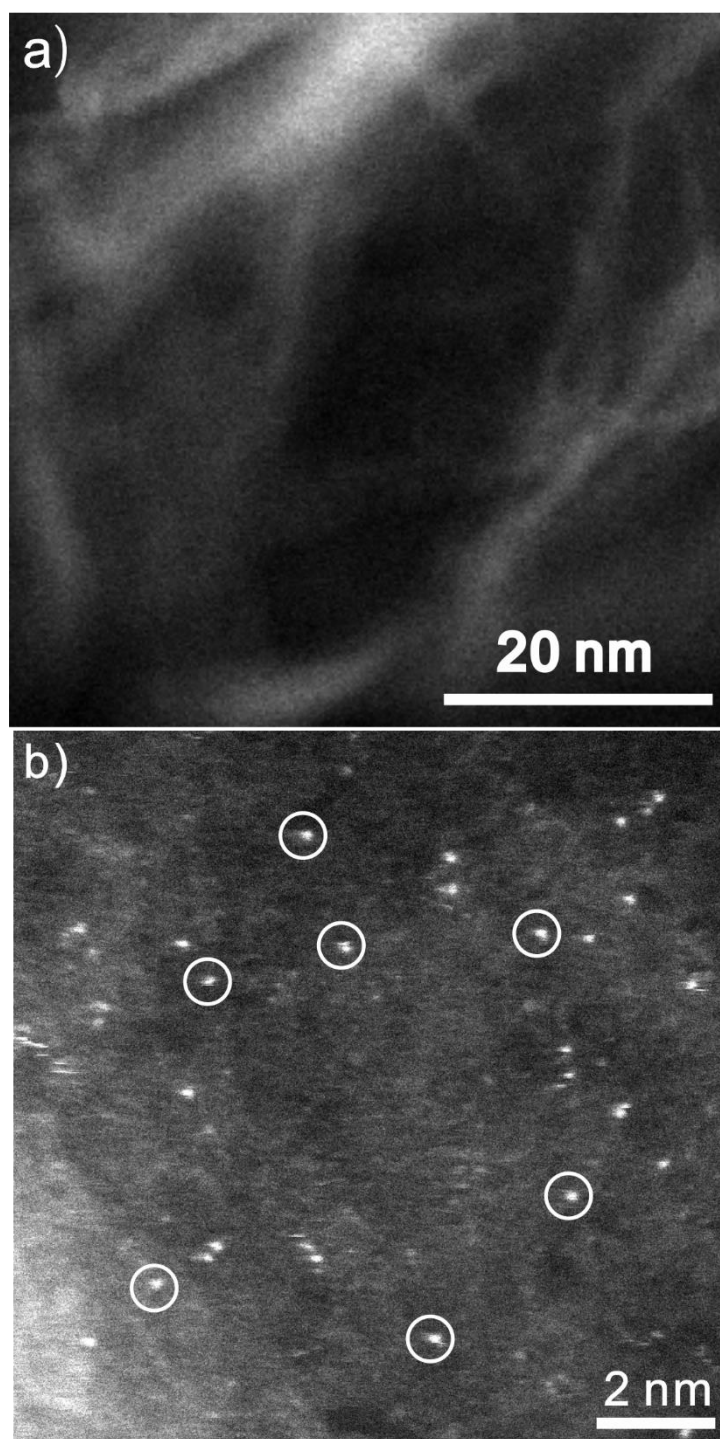


**Figure S2.** Representative HAADF-STEM images of Pt<sub>1</sub>/CeO<sub>2</sub> at (a) low- and (b) high-magnifications at other locations. Representative Pt<sub>1</sub> single atoms in (b) are highlighted by the white circles.

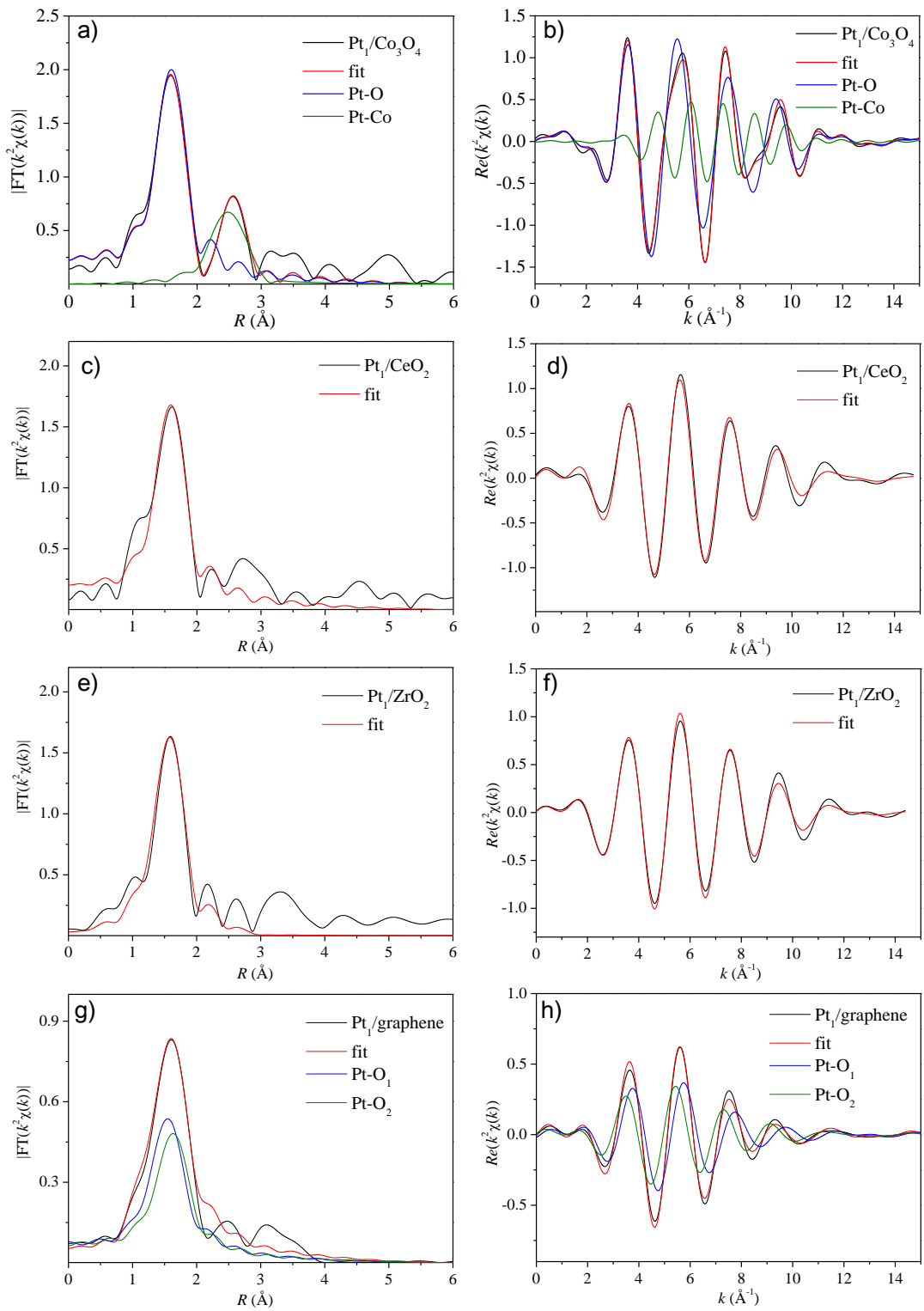




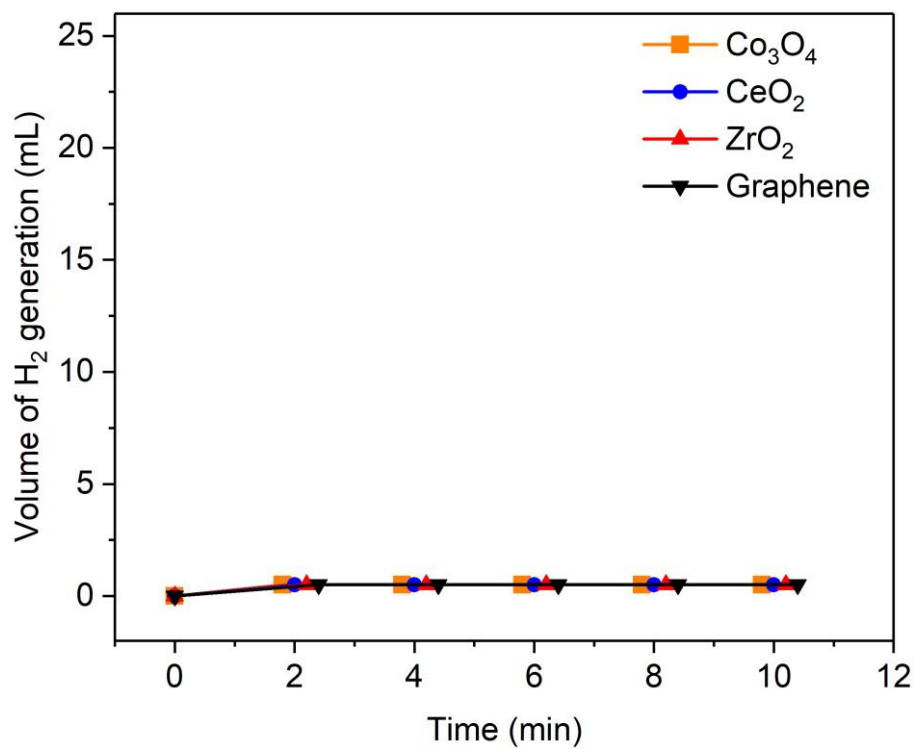
**Figure S3.** Representative HAADF-STEM images of Pt<sub>1</sub>/ZrO<sub>2</sub> at (a) low- and (b) high-magnifications at other locations. Representative Pt<sub>1</sub> single atoms in (b) are highlighted by the white circles.



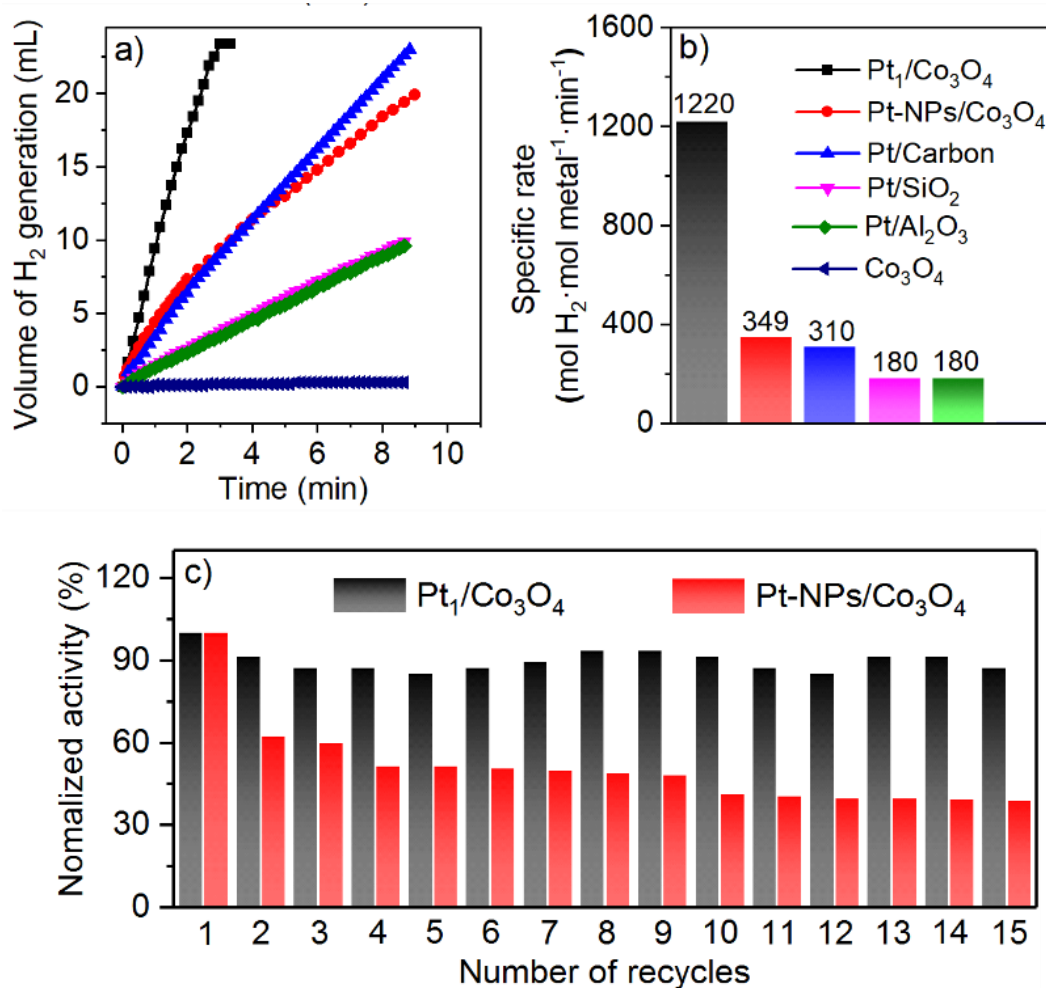
**Figure S4.** Representative HAADF-STEM images of Pt<sub>1</sub>/graphene at (a) low- and (b) high-magnifications at other locations. Representative Pt<sub>1</sub> single atoms in (b) are highlighted by the white circles.



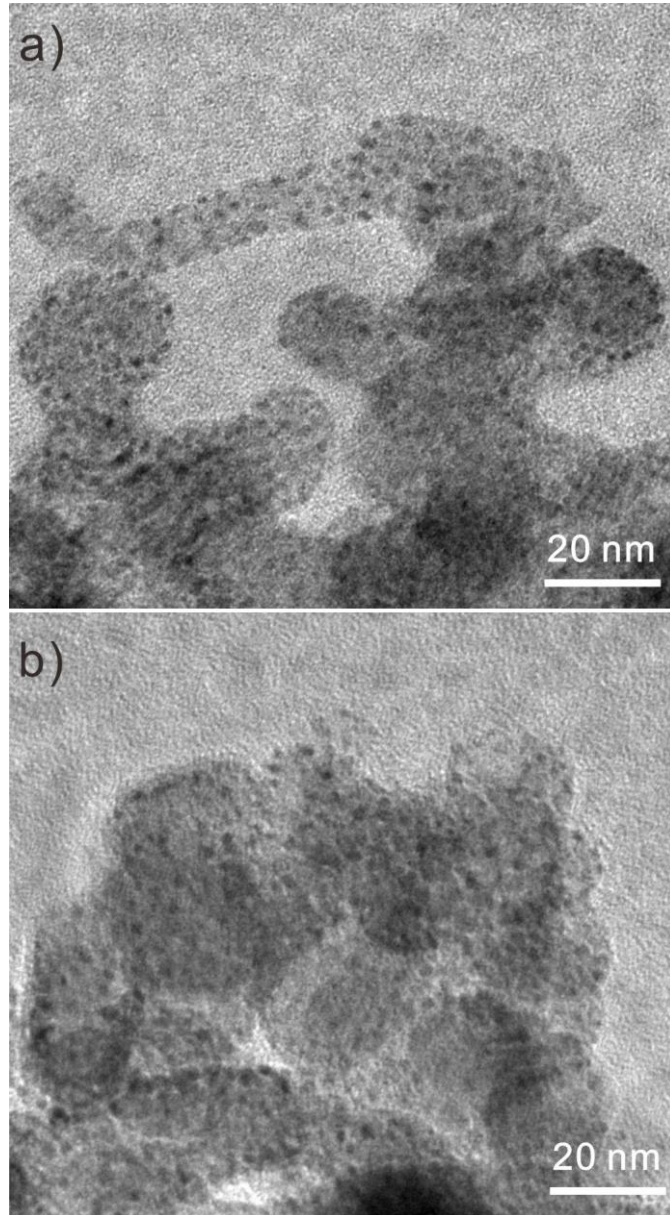
**Figure S5.** The Fourier transforms EXAFS fitting results of (a,b) Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, (c,d) Pt<sub>1</sub>/CeO<sub>2</sub>, (e,f) Pt<sub>1</sub>/ZrO<sub>2</sub>, and (g,f) Pt<sub>1</sub>/graphene samples at Pt L<sub>3</sub> edge.



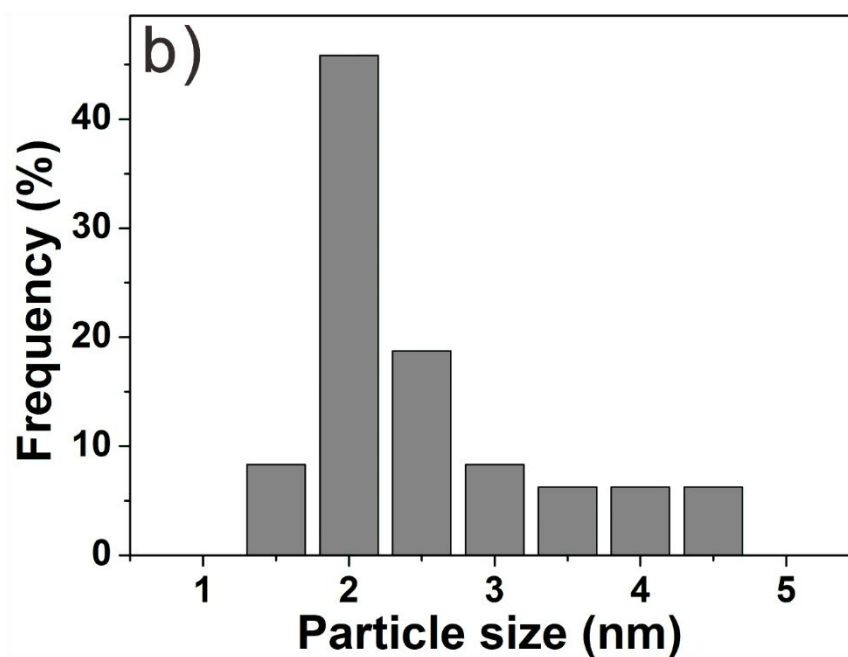
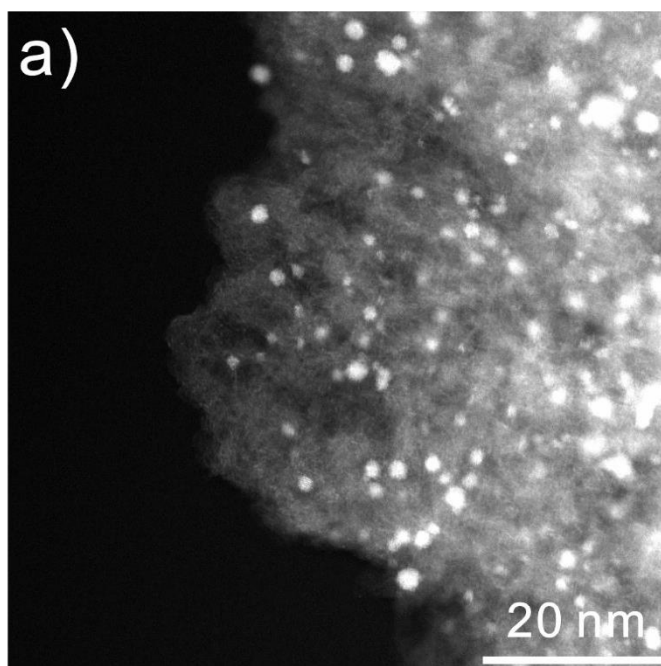
**Figure S6.** Plots of time vs volume of hydrogen gas generated from AB hydrolysis over four different supports.



**Figure S7.** (a) Plots of time vs volume of hydrogen gas generated from AB hydrolysis over different Pt-based catalysts; (b) Specific rates over these samples based on the amount of Pt. (c) Durability tests on Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> and Pt-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>.

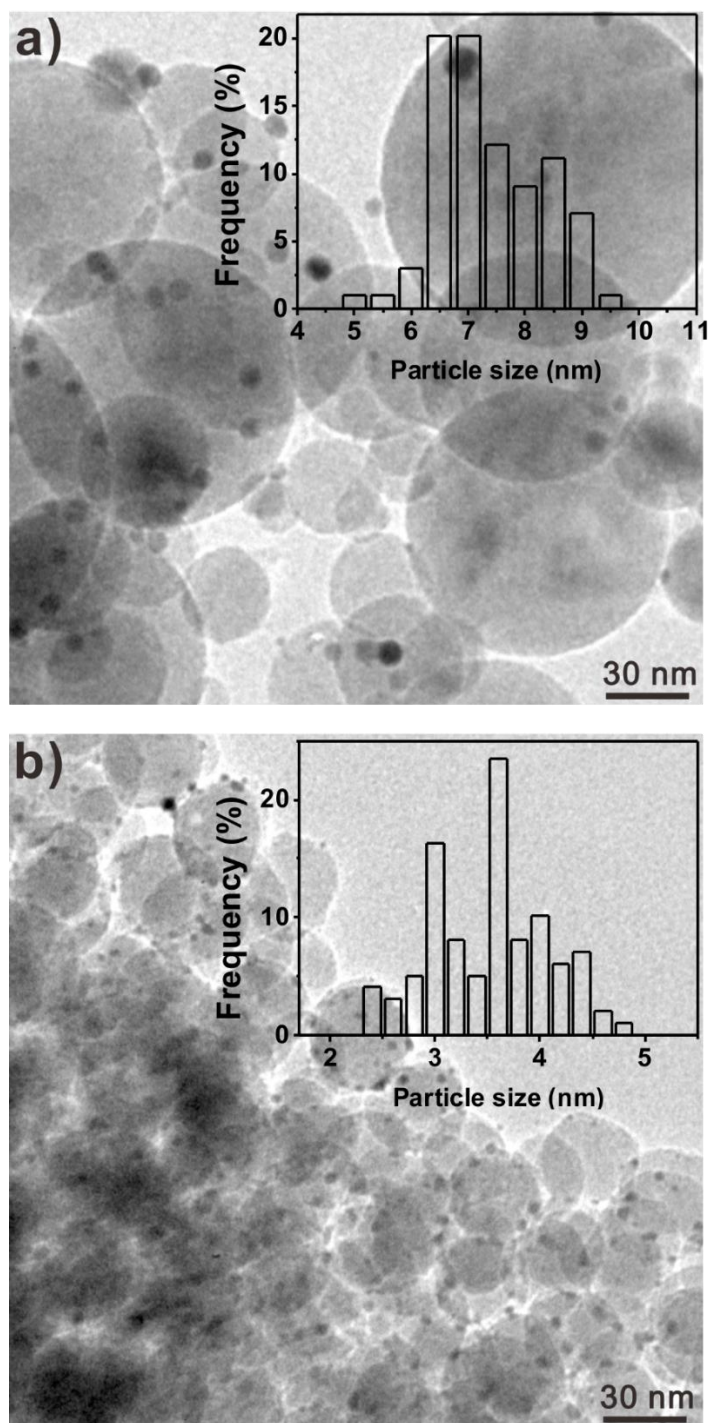


**Figure S8.** Representative TEM images of Pt-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>. The average of Pt particle size was 2.3 nm



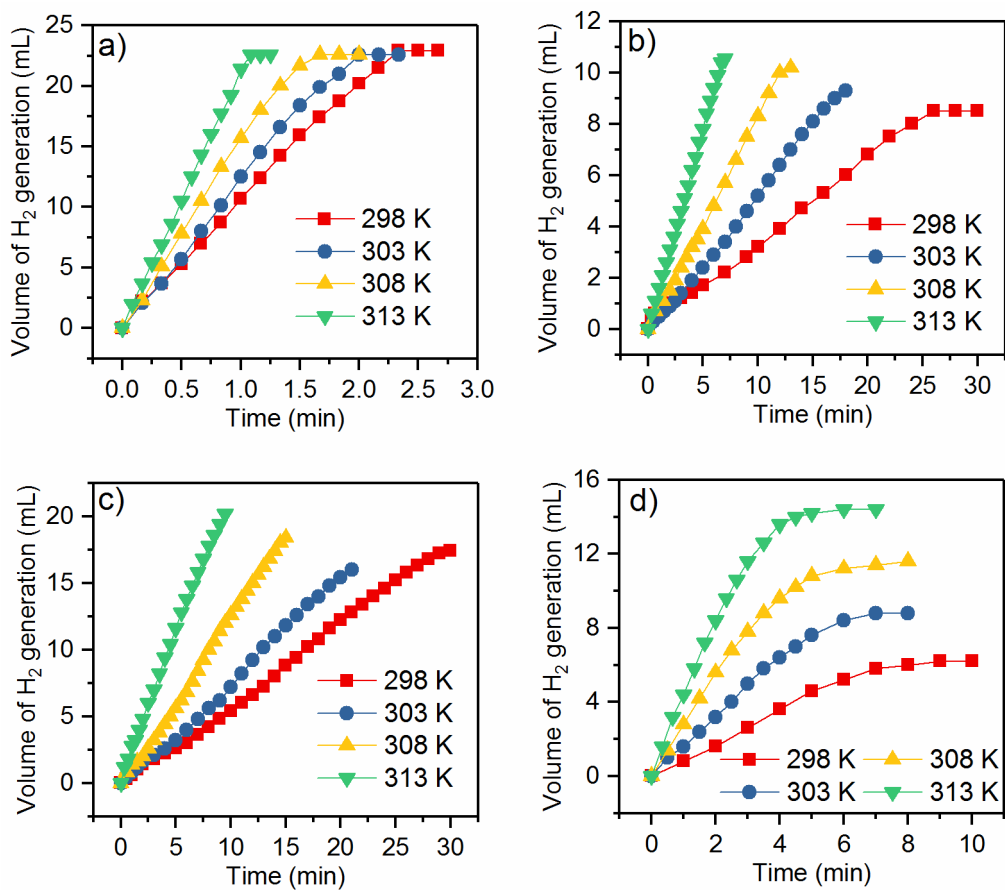
**Figure S9.** A representative HAADF STEM image of a commercial Pt/carbon (Sigma Aldrich) catalyst and its corresponding Pt particle distribution (b). The average of Pt particle size was 2.2 nm and the Pt loading was 5wt%.



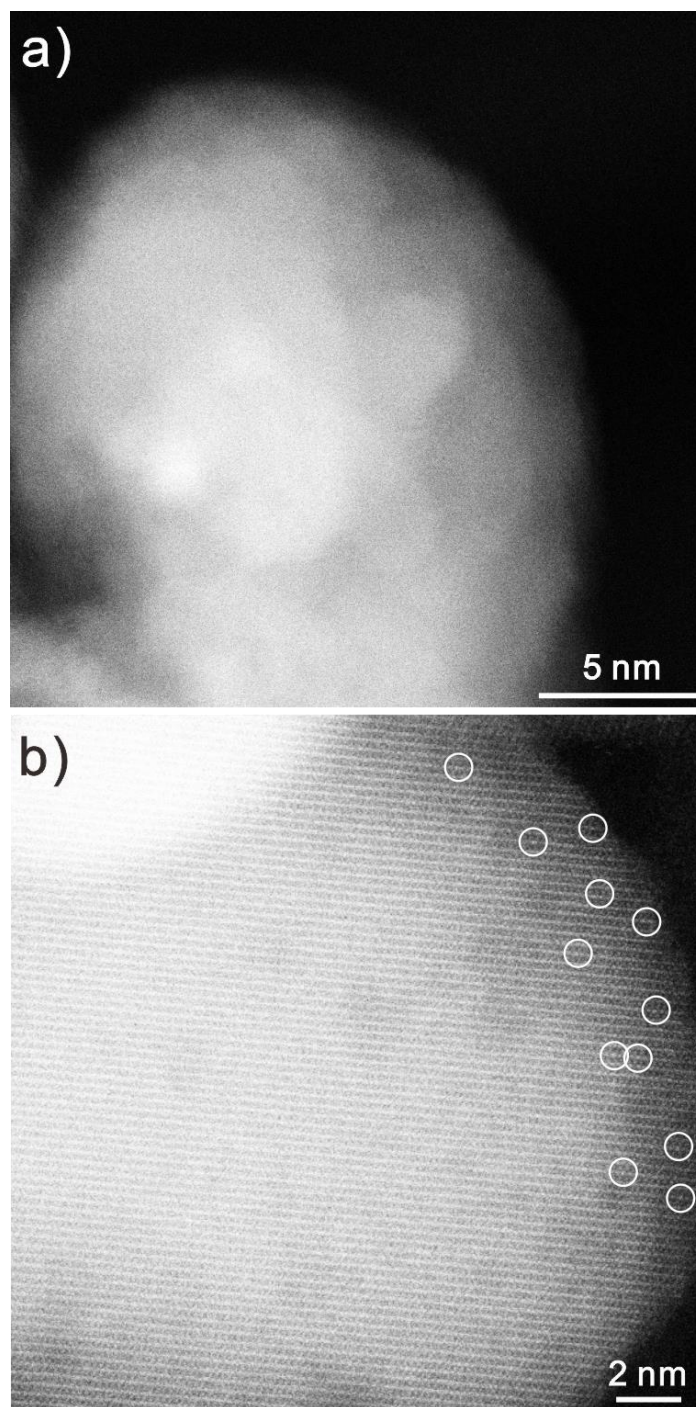


**Figure S10.** Representative TEM images of Pt/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> (a), Pt/SiO<sub>2</sub> (b) catalysts. The inserts showed the Pt particle size distribution. The average Pt particle size of 7.4 and 3.4 nm, and the Pt loadings of 3.7 and 3.3 wt% for Pt/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, Pt/SiO<sub>2</sub>, respectively.

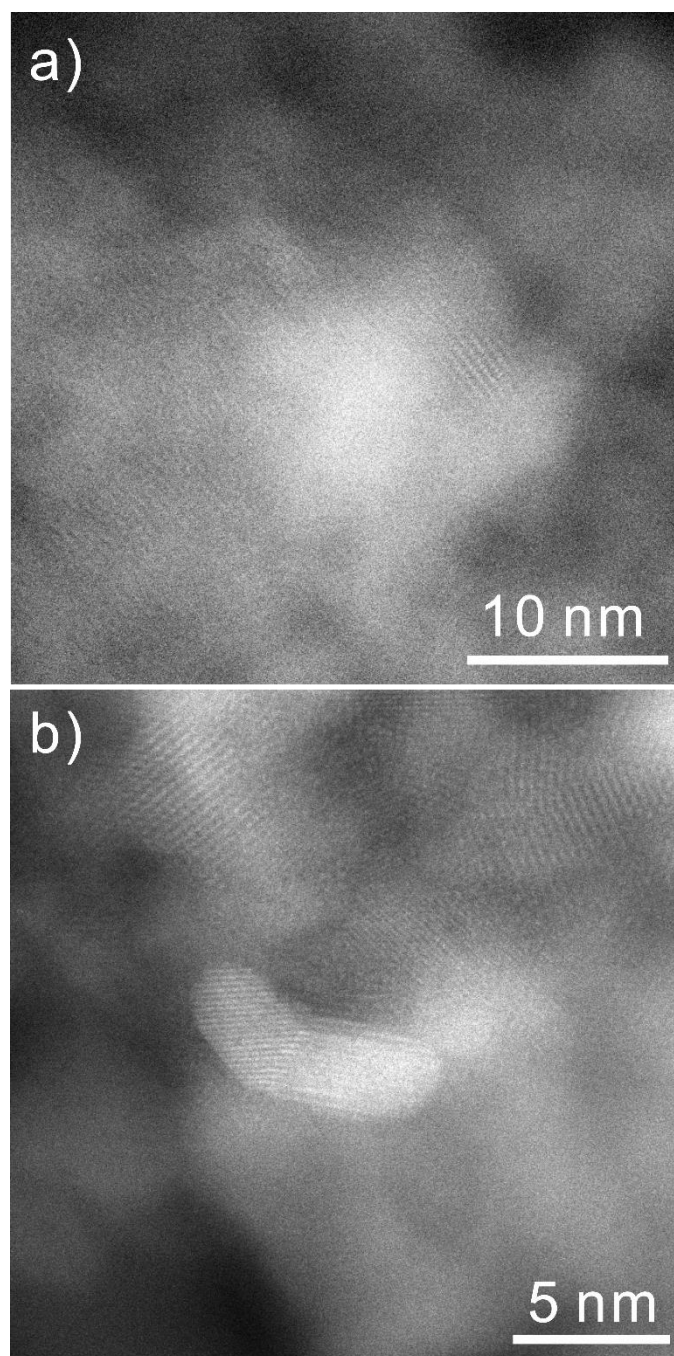




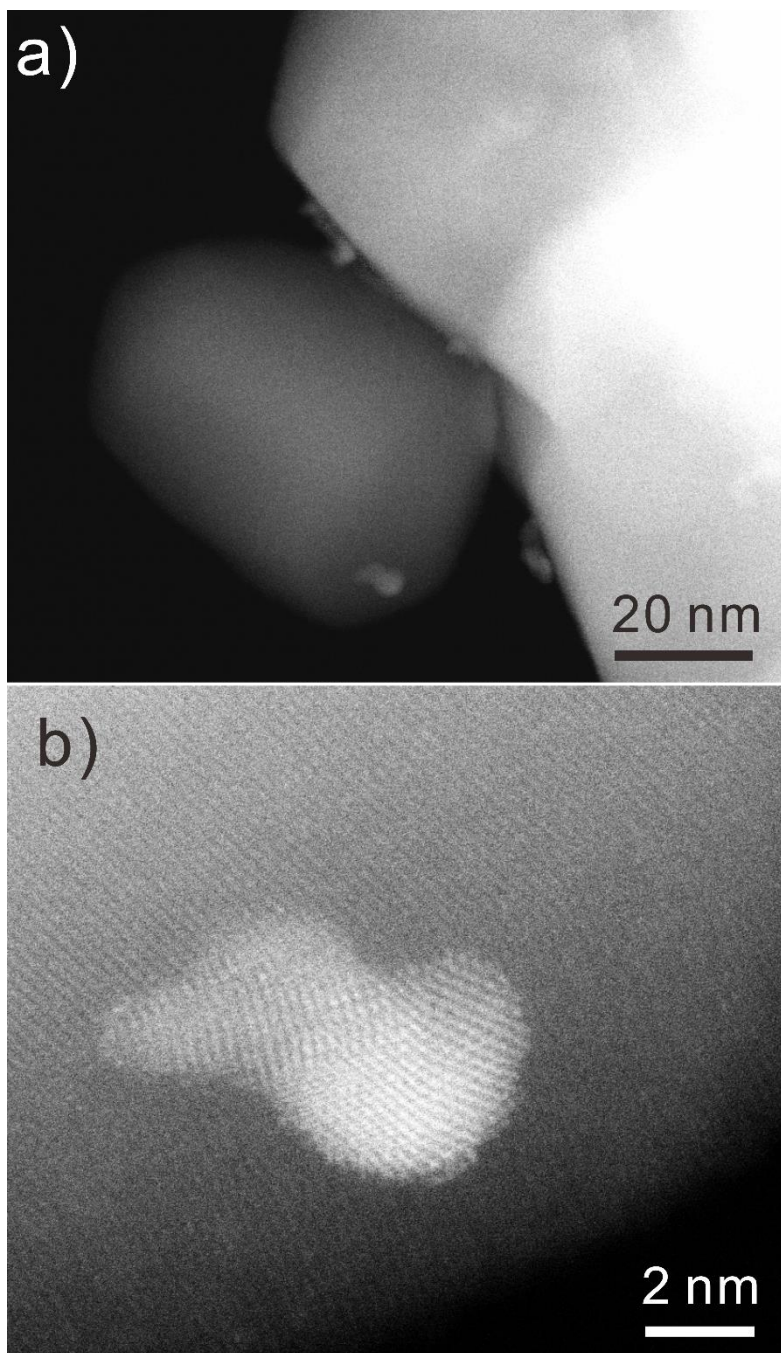
**Figure S11.** Temperature dependence of H<sub>2</sub> evolution plots from the hydrolytic dehydrogenation of AB over Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (a), Pt<sub>1</sub>/CeO<sub>2</sub> (b), Pt<sub>1</sub>/ZrO<sub>2</sub> (c) and Pt<sub>1</sub>/graphene (d) SAC catalysts.



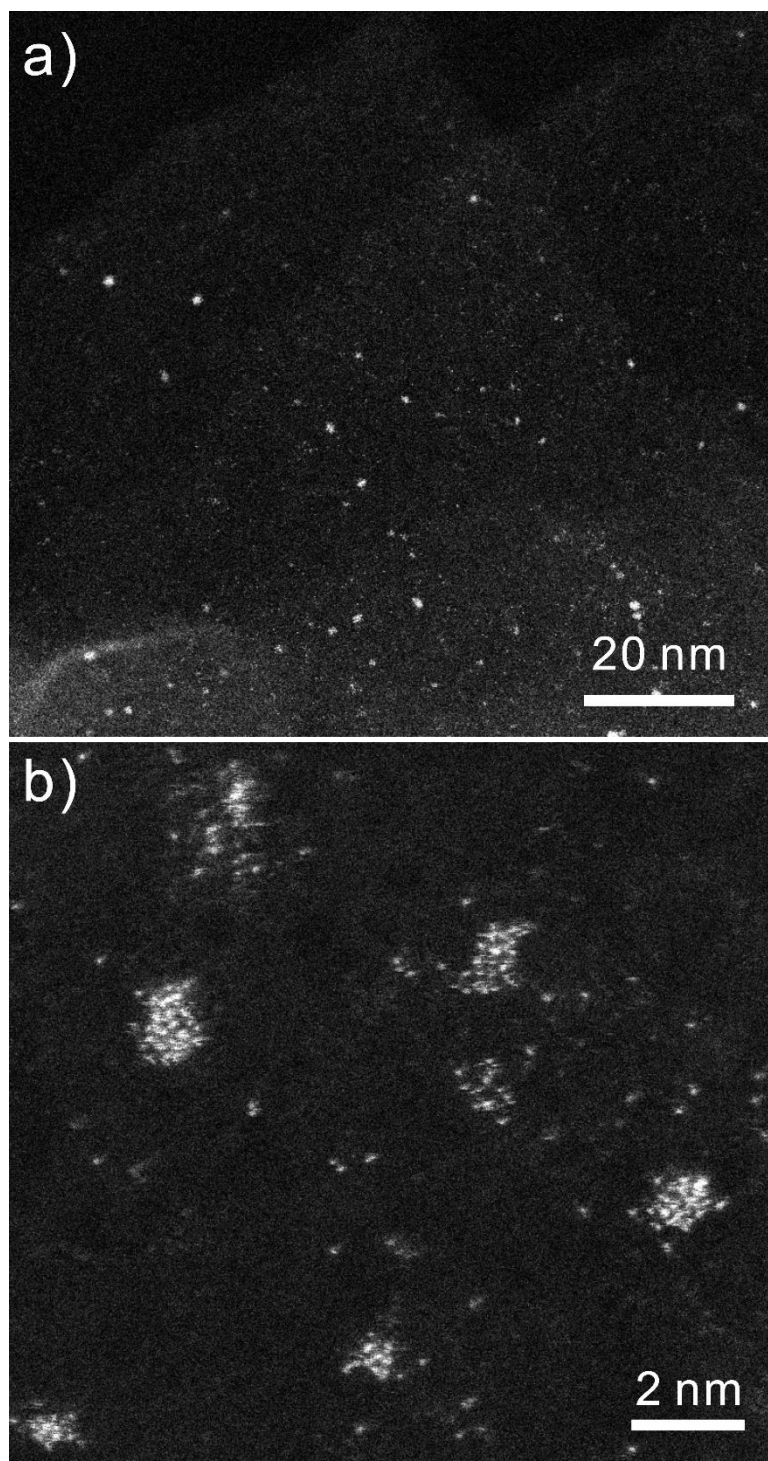
**Figure S12.** Representative HAADF-STEM images of Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> catalysts after 15 cycles of recycling test. No obvious cluster or nanoparticle were observed. Pt<sub>1</sub> atoms in images are highlighted by the white circles.



**Figure S13.** Representative HAADF-STEM images of Pt<sub>1</sub>/CeO<sub>2</sub> catalyst after 15 cycles of recycling test. Large size of Pt nanoparticles were observed.

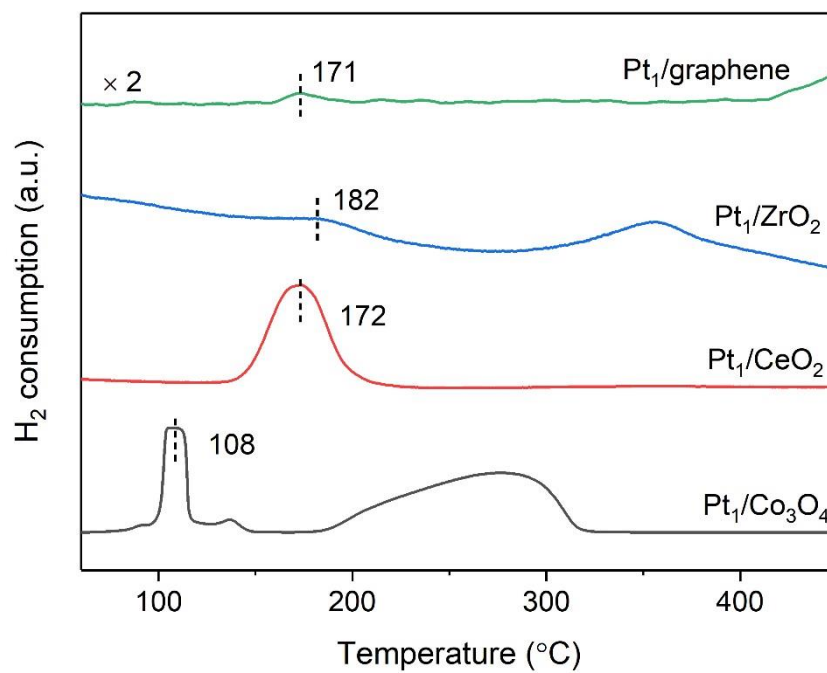


**Figure S14.** Representative HAADF-STEM images of Pt<sub>1</sub>/ZrO<sub>2</sub> catalyst after 15 cycles of recycling test. Large size of Pt nanoparticles were observed.

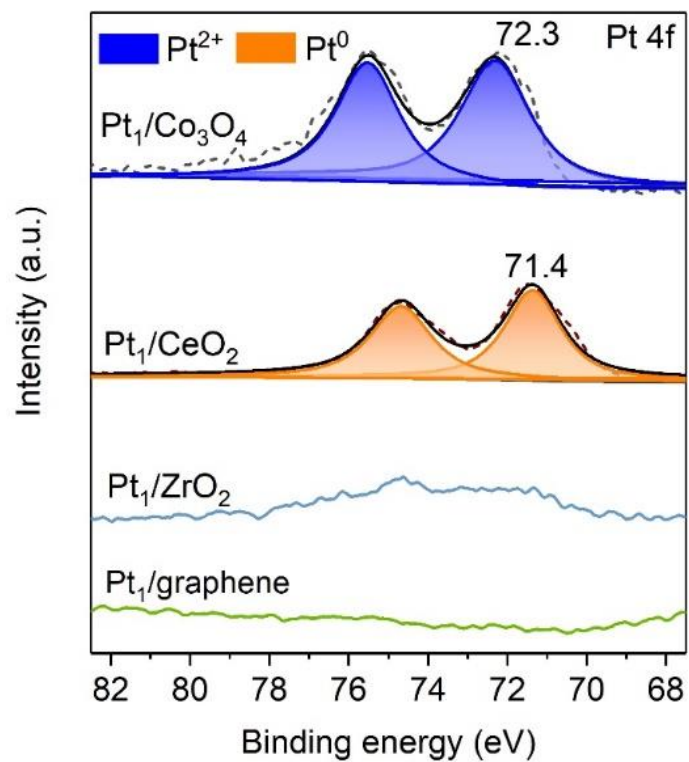


**Figure S15.** Representative HAADF-STEM images of Pt<sub>1</sub>/graphene catalyst after 15 cycles of recycling test. Pt nanoparticles were observed.

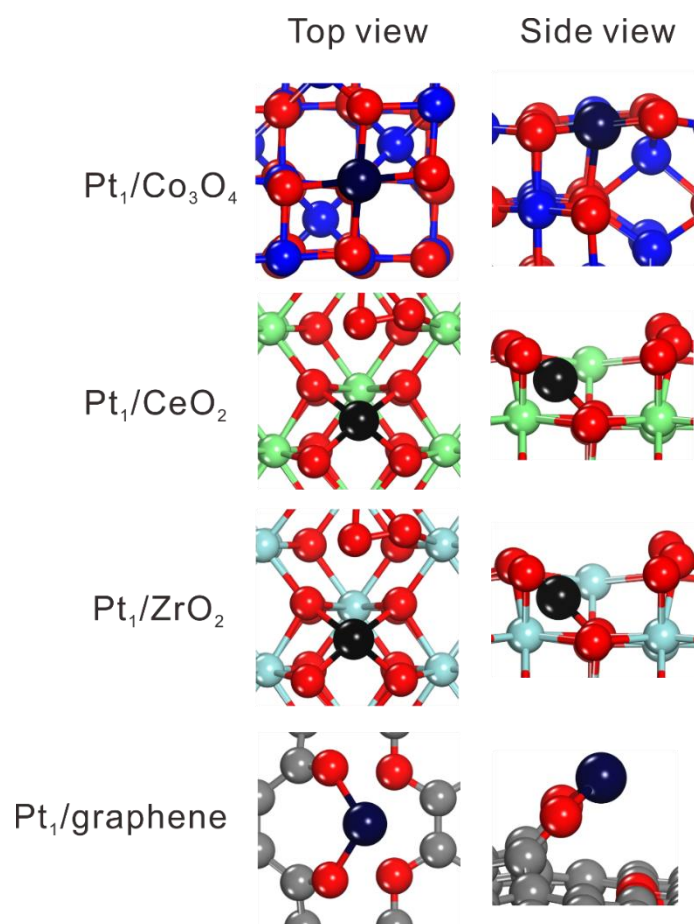




**Figure S16.** The H<sub>2</sub>-TPR profile on Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, Pt<sub>1</sub>/CeO<sub>2</sub>, Pt<sub>1</sub>/ZrO<sub>2</sub> and Pt<sub>1</sub>/graphene.



**Figure S17.** XPS spectra of the used Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, Pt<sub>1</sub>/CeO<sub>2</sub>, Pt<sub>1</sub>/ZrO<sub>2</sub>, and Pt<sub>1</sub>/graphene after 15 cycles of recyclability test in the Pt 4f region.

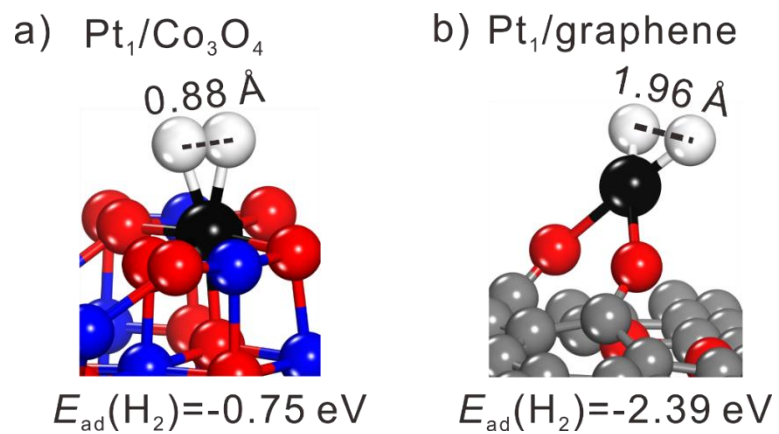


**Figure S18.** DFT suggested structures for various Pt<sub>1</sub> SACs under reducing conditions. The ball in gray, white, red, green, dark blue, sky blue and black represent carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, cerium, cobalt, zirconium and platinum, respectively.

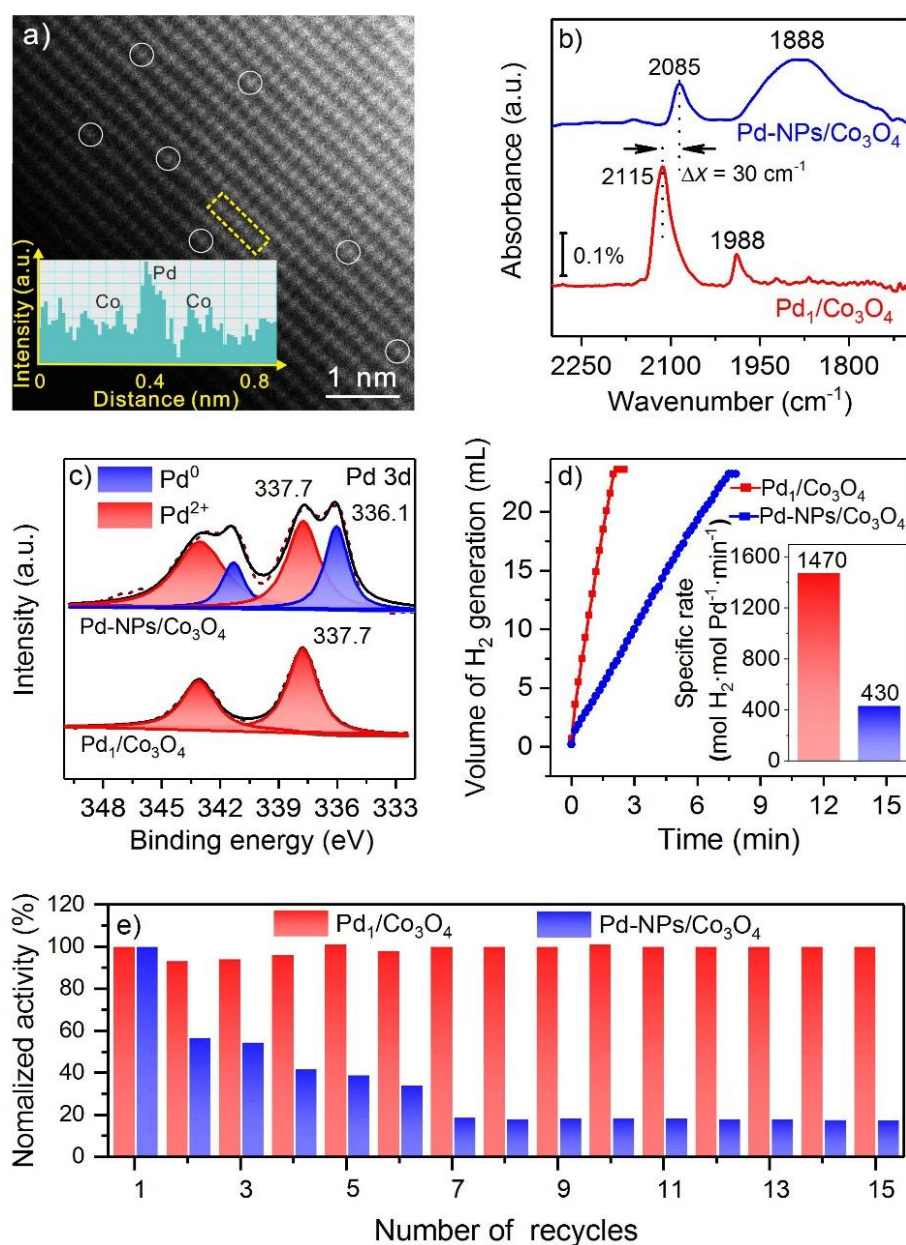
**Note:**

Graphene monolayer, Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (100), CeO<sub>2</sub> (110) and ZrO<sub>2</sub> (110) were selected as supports for a single Pt atom with above 16 Å vacuum layer. Pt<sub>1</sub>/Graphene was simulated by a (8 × 8) graphene supercell anchoring single Pt atom by two interfacial O in the carbon vacancies as in our previous work<sup>1b</sup>. For Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, single Pt atom replaces one of the surface Co atom in a supercell of ( $\sqrt{2} \times \sqrt{2}$ ) nine-atomic-layer Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (100) surface and the bottom three layers are fixed at their bulk positions.<sup>9a</sup> In the structures of Pt<sub>1</sub>/CeO<sub>2</sub> and Pt<sub>1</sub>/ZrO<sub>2</sub>, the CeO<sub>2</sub> (110) and ZrO<sub>2</sub> (110) surfaces were modeled by p (2 × 3) five-atomic-layer supercells with the bottom two layers fixed. The single Pt atom substituted one of the 6-fold Ce or Zr atoms on the surfaces, which leads to the formation of adsorbed surface O<sub>2</sub> species, according to the literature.<sup>10</sup>





**Figure S19.** Local configurations for  $\text{H}_2$  adsorption on  $\text{Pt}_1/\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4$  (a),  $\text{Pt}_1/\text{graphene}$  (b). The ball in gray, white, red, dark blue and black represent carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, cobalt, and platinum, respectively.



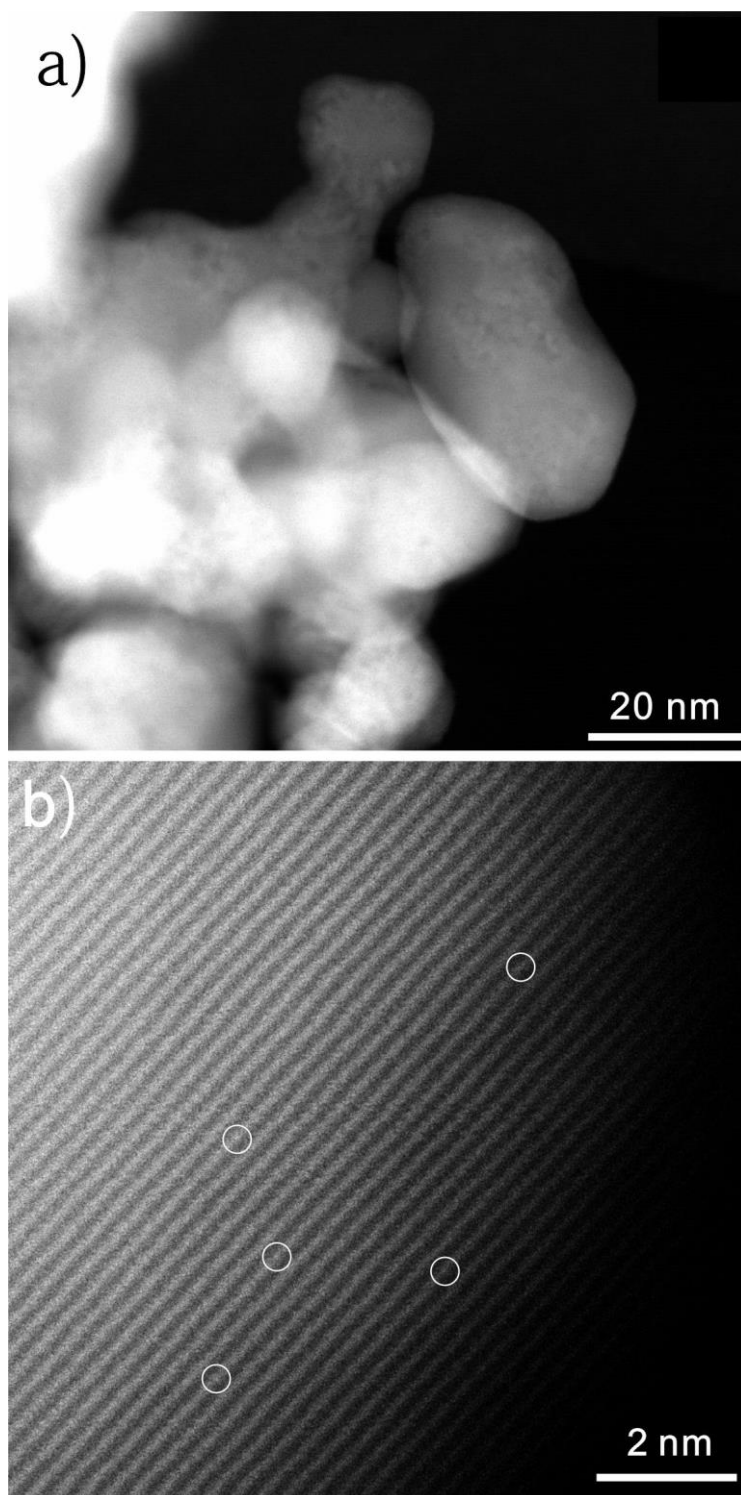
**Figure S20.** Structural characterization and catalytic performance of Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> and Pd-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> catalysts. (a) A representative HAADF-STEM image of Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>. (b) DRIFT spectra of CO chemisorption, (c) XPS spectra in the Pd 3d region, (d) plots of hydrogen gas generated as a function of time in the AB dehydrogenation reaction at 25 °C, and (e) recyclability test on Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> and Pd-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>. The inset in (a) shows the scanning intensity profile along the yellow dash square. The inset in (d) shows the corresponding mass specific rates at room temperature.

Notes:

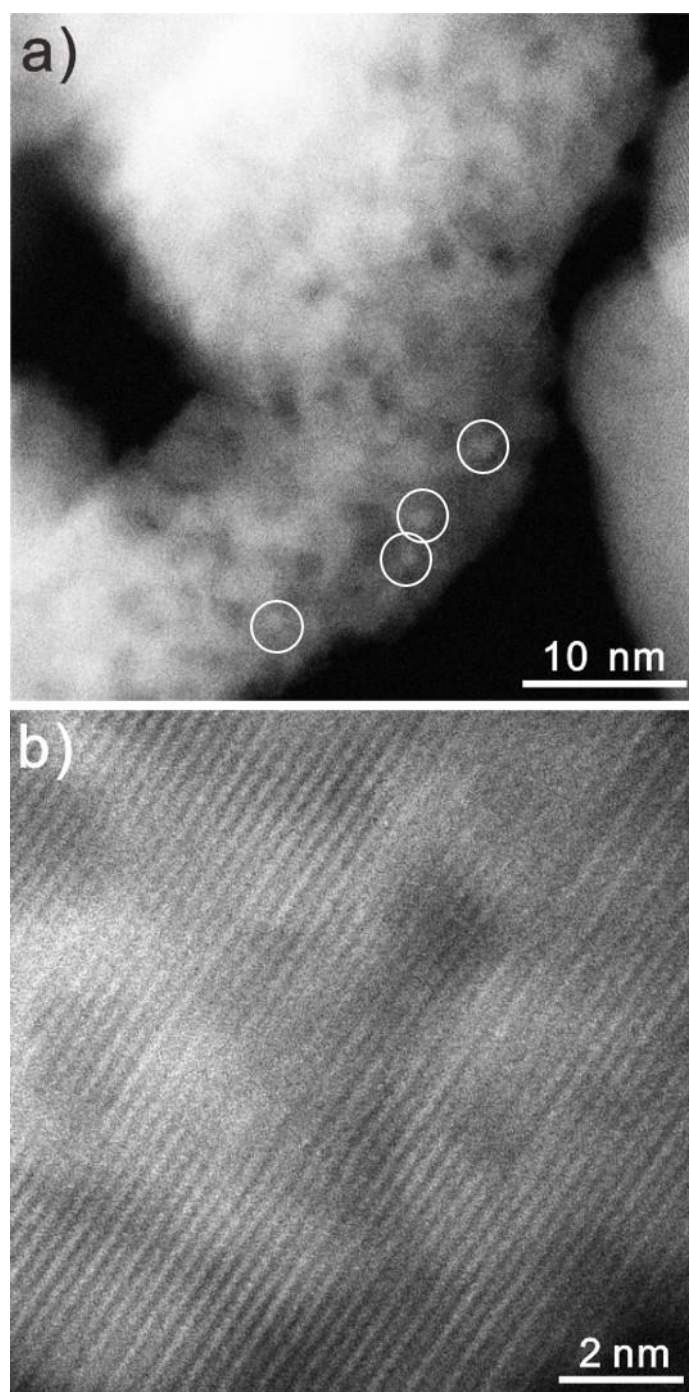
To further examine the remarkable EMSI promotion on both activity and stability of SACs, a Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> SAC (Figs. S20a, S21) and a Pd particle sample of Pd-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (Fig. S22) were also synthesized. HAADF-STEM confirmed the atomic dispersion of

Pd in Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, without any visible NPs/clusters (Figs. S20a, S21). DRIFTS CO chemisorption on Pd-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> showed two CO peaks at 2085 and 1888 cm<sup>-1</sup> (Fig. S20b), which are assigned to linear and three-hollow site CO on Pd NPs, respectively.<sup>11</sup> On Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, one intense peak at 2115 cm<sup>-1</sup> and a much weaker one at 1988 cm<sup>-1</sup>, were observed, which are assigned to linear CO on Pd<sub>1</sub>, and probably bridge-bonded CO on ultra-small Pd aggregates, respectively,<sup>11</sup> again supporting that isolated Pd<sub>1</sub> atoms are the dominate form in Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>. Compared with the peak of linear CO on Pd NPs (2085 cm<sup>-1</sup>), the large blue shift of 30 cm<sup>-1</sup> on Pd<sub>1</sub> suggests the Pd<sub>1</sub> atoms are positively charged, along with a greater depletion of 5*d* electronic states.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, XPS showed the valence state of the Pd<sub>1</sub> atoms in Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was close to ~2+ according to the Pd 3d<sub>5/2</sub> peak at 337.7 eV (Fig. S20c), while the Pd-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> sample showed a mixture of 2+ and zero valence states.

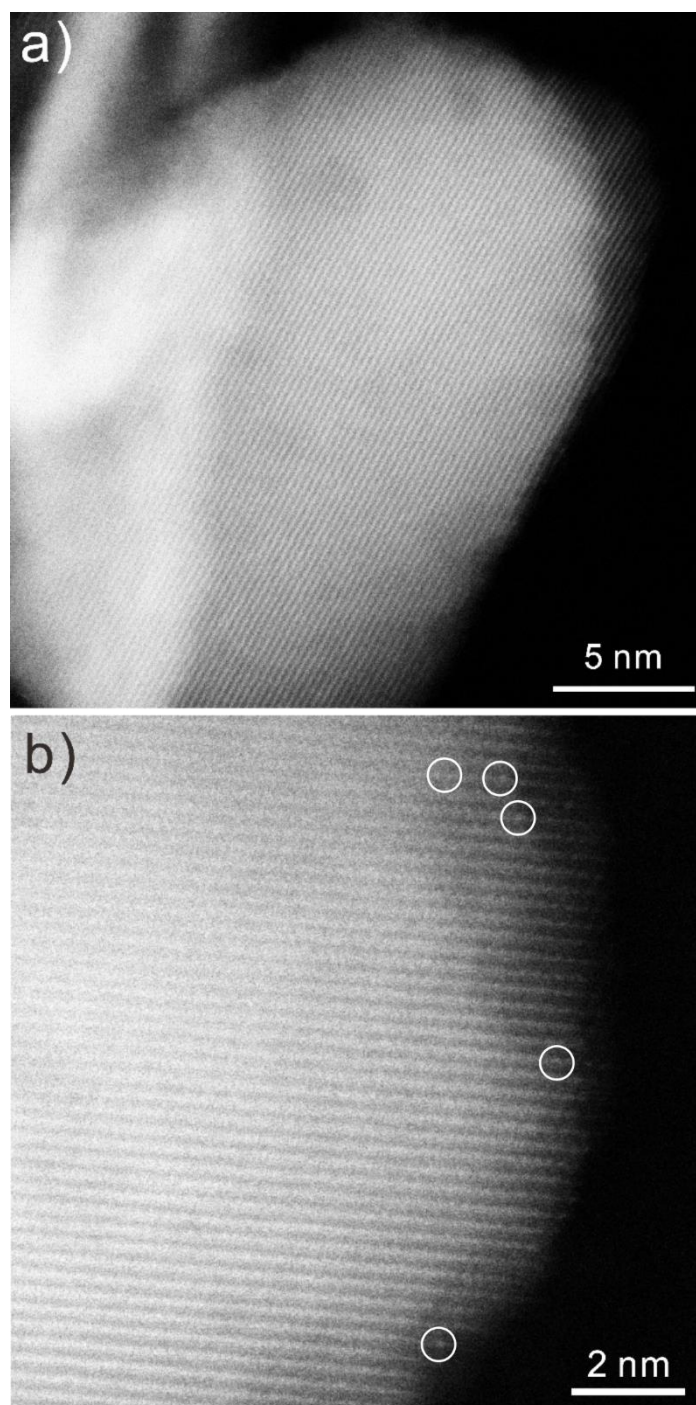
In AB dehydrogenation, the total volume of 23.4 mL of H<sub>2</sub> gas was generated in 2.1 and 7.8 min on Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> and Pd-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, respectively (Fig. S20d). The corresponding mass specific rate for Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was 1470 mol<sub>H2</sub> mol<sub>Pd</sub><sup>-1</sup> min<sup>-1</sup>, even higher than Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, and about 3.4 times higher than Pd-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (430 min<sup>-1</sup>, the inset of Fig. S20d). Importantly, the Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> sample again exhibited excellent recyclability, without any visible activity deactivation and metal sintering/leaching after 15 cycles of recyclability test, in sharp contrast to Pd-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (Figs. S20e, S22, S23, and Table S1), again unambiguously supporting the strong EMSI promotion of activity and stability of SACs.



**Figure S21.** Representative HAADF-STEM images of Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> at (a) low- and (b) high-magnifications at other locations. Representative Pd<sub>1</sub> single atoms in (b) are highlighted by the white circles.

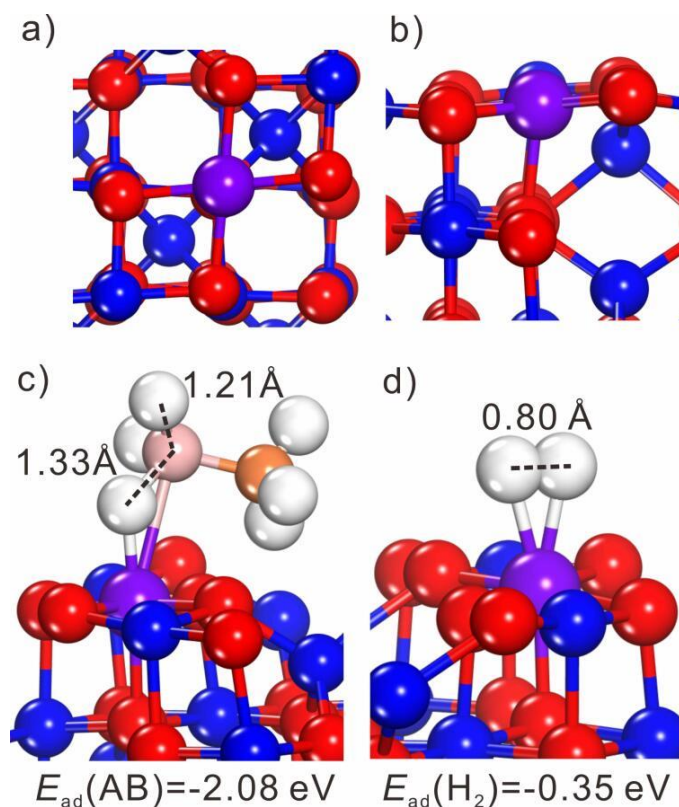


**Figure S22.** Representative HAADF-STEM images of Pd-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> at (a) low- and (b) high-magnifications. The white circles highlight the Pd NPs.



**Figure S23.** Representative HAADF-STEM images of Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> catalyst after 15 cycles of recycling test. No obvious cluster or nanoparticle were observed. Pd<sub>1</sub> atoms in (b) are highlighted by the white circles.

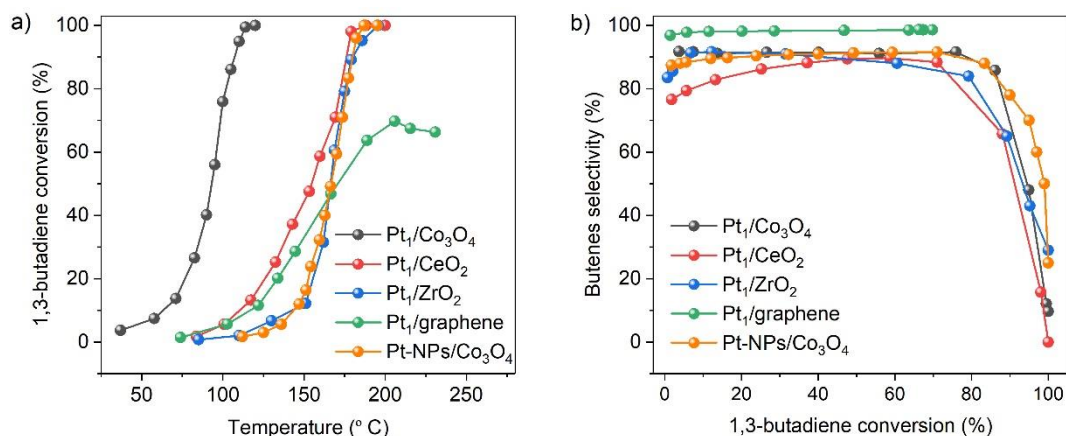




**Figure S24.** Top (a) and side (b) views of DFT suggested structure for Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> SAC. The local configurations for AB (c) and H<sub>2</sub> (d) adsorption on Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>. The ball in purple, blue, red, pink, orange, and white represent palladium, cobalt, oxygen, boron, nitrogen, and hydrogen, respectively.

Notes:

DFT calculations were further carried out the Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>. Similar to Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, single Pd atom replaces one of the surface Co atom in a supercell of ( $\sqrt{2} \times \sqrt{2}$ ) nine-atomic-layer Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (100) surface (Fig. S24a,b). When AB is absorbed on Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, the B-H distance is elongated from 1.21 to 1.33 Å with an adsorption energy of -2.08 eV (Fig. S24c), slightly weaker than on Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (-2.65 eV). H<sub>2</sub> adsorption on Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was very weak about only -0.35 eV (Fig. S24d), which is considerably weaker than H<sub>2</sub> adsorption on Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> (-0.75 eV) for accelerating H<sub>2</sub> desorption, explaining the high activity of Pd<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>.



**Figure S25.** Catalytic performance of Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, Pt<sub>1</sub>/CeO<sub>2</sub>, Pt<sub>1</sub>/ZrO<sub>2</sub>, and Pt<sub>1</sub>/graphene SACs as well as the particle sample of Pt-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>. (a) 1,3-butadiene conversion as a function of reaction temperature; (b) The selectivity to butenes as a function of 1,3-butadiene conversion. Reaction conditions: The feed gas was 2.0 % 1,3-butadiene and 4.0 % H<sub>2</sub> with Ar as the balance gas at a total flow rate of 25 mL/min.

Notes:

Selective hydrogenation of 1,3-butadiene to butenes is an important industrial process to purify the alkenes streams from petroleum cracking.<sup>1a</sup> Development of a catalyst with high selectivity to butenes especially 1-butene at near complete conversion of 1,3-butadiene and long durability against deactivation via coking is highly demanded.

Here we further evaluated these four SACs as well as Pt-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> in selective hydrogenation of 1,3-butadiene. Our preliminary results showed that Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> exhibited much higher catalytic activity than other three Pt<sub>1</sub> SACs. The Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> achieved 100% conversion at 114 °C which is much lower than that of Pt<sub>1</sub>/CeO<sub>2</sub> (188 °C) and Pt<sub>1</sub>/ZrO<sub>2</sub> (196 °C). The Pt<sub>1</sub>/graphene could only reach 66% conversion even the temperature is 230 °C (Fig. S25a). Very surprisingly, we found that the hydrogenation activity of Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was even remarkably higher than the nanoparticle sample of Pt-NPs/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>. Moreover, the selectivity to butenes over Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub> was about 92 % at 70 % conversion of 1,3-butadiene, which was also the highest one among these five samples (Fig. S25b).

These new catalytic results further provide strong evidence of the vital role of EMSI in SACs on their catalytic performance of SACs. Apparently, such remarkable EMSI effect on SACs could be general in many catalytic reactions, shedding light on rational design of advanced SACs with high activity.



**Table S1.** Relative loading of Pt (Pd) loadings on fresh and used samples, as well as the accumulated B content on the used sample, which has a severe impact on catalyst poisoning.

Samples	Pt and Pd loadings (wt %)		Metal loss (%) <sup>b</sup>	B loadings (wt%)
	Fresh samples	Used samples <sup>a</sup>		
Pt <sub>1</sub> /Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	0.5	0.5	0	1.3
Pt <sub>1</sub> /CeO <sub>2</sub>	1.1	0.7	36	0.9
Pt <sub>1</sub> /ZrO <sub>2</sub>	0.2	0.1	50	0.3
Pt <sub>1</sub> /graphene	0.4	0.2	50	5.7
Pt-NPs/Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	13.5	9.4	30	7.9
Pd <sub>1</sub> /Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	0.3	0.3	0	2.2
Pd-NPs/Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	0.7	0.3	57	2.3

<sup>a</sup>the metal loadings of the used samples after 15 cycles of recycling test.

<sup>b</sup>the metal loss was calculated by the equation:

$$\text{Metal loss} = (M_{\text{Fresh}} - M_{\text{Used}}) / M_{\text{Fresh}} \times 100\%,$$

where  $M_{\text{Fresh}}$  is the metal loadings of the fresh samples,  $M_{\text{Used}}$  is the metal loadings of the fresh samples

**Table S2** Structural parameters of the Pt<sub>1</sub> SACs and the Pt foil and PtO<sub>2</sub> references extracted from quantitative EXAFS curve-fittings using the ARTEMIS module of IFEFFIT.

Sample	Path	CNs	R(Å)	$\sigma^2$ (10 <sup>-3</sup> Å <sup>2</sup> )	$\Delta E_0$ (eV)	R-factor
Pt foil	Pt-Pt	12	2.77			
PtO <sub>2</sub>	Pt-O	6.0	2.07			
	Pt-Pt	6.0	3.10			
Pt <sub>1</sub> /Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	Pt-O	5.7	2.00	2.5	9.5	0.001
	Pt-Co	4.8	2.91	9.3	0.1	
Pt <sub>1</sub> /CeO <sub>2</sub>	Pt-O	4.9	2.00	3.0	10.0	0.006
Pt <sub>1</sub> /ZrO <sub>2</sub>	Pt-O	4.8	1.99	2.9	8.9	0.003
Pt <sub>1</sub> /graphene	Pt-O1	2.0	1.96	6.7	9.9	0.007
	Pt-O2	2.0	2.05	6.7	9.9	

CNs, coordination numbers; R, bonding distance;  $\sigma^2$ , Debye-Waller factor;  $\Delta E_0$ , inner potential shift.

**Table S3.** A comparison of catalytic activities over various metal catalysts in hydrolysis of AB measured in this work and the ones reported in literature.

Catalyst	T (°C)	Specific rate (mol·H <sub>2</sub> ·molmetal <sup>-1</sup> ·min <sup>-1</sup> )	Ea (kJ·mol <sup>-1</sup> )	Reference
Pt <sub>1</sub> /Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	25	1220	37.4	This work
Pd <sub>1</sub> /Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	25	1470	55.4	This work
Pt <sub>1</sub> /CeO <sub>2</sub>	25	18	78.2	This work
Pt <sub>1</sub> /ZrO <sub>2</sub>	25	65	80.6	This work
Pt <sub>1</sub> /graphene	25	160	69.8	This work
Pt-NPs/Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	25	349	-	This work
Pt/Carbon	25	310	-	This work
Pt/SiO <sub>2</sub>	25	180	-	This work
Pt/Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	25	180	-	This work
Pd-NPs/Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	25	430	-	This work
PEI-GO/Pt <sub>0.17</sub> Co <sub>0.8</sub>	25	378	51.6	Ref <sup>13</sup>
Co <sub>0.32</sub> @Pt <sub>0.68</sub> /C	25	248.5	41.5	Ref <sup>14</sup>
Pt/CeO <sub>2</sub> /RGO	25	48	-	Ref <sup>15</sup>
Pt/γ Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	25	222	39	Ref <sup>16</sup>
Pt-MIL-101	25	260	40.7	Ref <sup>17</sup>
Pd@Co/grapheme	25	409	-	Ref <sup>18</sup>
Co <sub>35</sub> Pd <sub>65</sub> /C annealed	25	54.9	27.5	Ref <sup>19</sup>
Pd/zeolite	25	6.25	56	Ref <sup>20</sup>
PSSA-co-MA-Pd	25	20	44	Ref <sup>21</sup>
Pd/γ Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	25	1.39	-	Ref <sup>22</sup>
Ru@Co/grapheme	25	344	-	Ref <sup>23</sup>
RuCo/γ Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	25	33	47	Ref <sup>24</sup>
Ru@Co/C	25	320	21.16	Ref <sup>25</sup>
RuCo/Ti <sub>3</sub> C <sub>2</sub> X <sub>2</sub>	25	896	31.1	Ref <sup>26</sup>

**Table S4** Structural parameters of the optimized Pt<sub>1</sub> SACs under the reducing conditions by DFT calculations.

Sample	DFT		
	Path	CNs	R(Å)
Pt <sub>1</sub> /Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	Pt-O1	1	1.99
	Pt-O2	3	2.02
	Pt-O3	1	2.03
	Pt-Co1	1	2.92
	Pt-Co2	2	2.94
	Pt-Co3	1	2.96
Pt <sub>1</sub> /CeO <sub>2</sub>	Pt-O1	2	2.00
	Pt-O2	2	2.02
Pt <sub>1</sub> /ZrO <sub>2</sub>	Pt-O1	2	2.01
	Pt-O2	1	2.02
	Pt-O3	1	2.03
Pt <sub>1</sub> /graphene*	Pt-O	2	1.96

\*Notes: AB is known as an excellent reducing agent. The terminal dioxygen of Pt<sub>1</sub>/graphene as suggested by XAFS and DFT calculations in our previous work is likely stripped off during the reaction<sup>1b</sup>, which gives a Pt-O coordination number of 2.

**Table S5.** Calculated binding energies of Pt<sub>1</sub> atom in the samples of Pt<sub>1</sub>/Co<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, Pt<sub>1</sub>/CeO<sub>2</sub>, Pt<sub>1</sub>/ZrO<sub>2</sub>, and Pt<sub>1</sub>/graphene.

Samples	Binding energy (eV)
Pt <sub>1</sub> /Co <sub>3</sub> O <sub>4</sub>	-8.43
Pt <sub>1</sub> /CeO <sub>2</sub>	-8.34
Pt <sub>1</sub> /ZrO <sub>2</sub>	-7.23
Pt <sub>1</sub> /graphene	-2.31

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