



**FePd nanowires modified with cyclodextrin as improved catalysts: Effect of the alloy composition on colloidal stability and catalytic capacity.**

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Complete List of Authors:	<p>Herrera, Elisa; Universidad Nacional de Córdoba Facultad de Ciencias Químicas, Departamento de Química Orgánica.; Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, CONICET. Instituto de Investigaciones en Físicoquímica de Córdoba, INFIQC, Aprea, María; bUniversidad Nacional de Córdoba. Facultad de Matemática, Astronomía, Física y Computación. CONICET, IFEG. Silva, Oscar; aInstituto de Investigaciones en Físico-Química de Córdoba, INFIQC-CONICET , . Facultad de Ciencias Químicas. Departamento de Química Orgánica.</p> <p>Rivas, Julieta; Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. Facultad de Matemática, Astronomía, Física y Computación; CONICET, IFEG.</p> <p>Bercoff, Paula; Universidad Nacional de Córdoba Facultad de Matemática Astronomía y Física, FAMAF; CONICET Cordoba, IFEG</p> <p>Granados, Alejandro; Universidad Nacional de Córdoba Facultad de Ciencias Químicas, Departamento de Química Orgánica; CONICET, INFIQC</p>

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Instituto de Investigaciones en Físicoquímica de Córdoba (INFIQC), CONICET  
Departamento de Química Orgánica, Facultad de Ciencias Químicas,  
Universidad Nacional de Córdoba.

Haya de la Torre y Medina Allende, Ciudad Universitaria, X5000HUA, Córdoba. Argentina.

TE: +54-351-5353867 ext: 53344

e-mail: ale.granados@unc.edu.ar

Alejandro M. Granados



Córdoba, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Dr. Christopher Williams  
Associate Editor, Catalysis Science & Technology  
Professor, University of South Carolina  
Department of Chemical Engineering

Dear Prof. Williams,

Please find enclosed the revised version of manuscript ID: CY-ART-12-2021-002219 entitled:

***FePd nanowires modified with cyclodextrin as improved catalysts: Effect of the alloy composition on colloidal stability and catalytic capacity.***

by Elisa Herrera, M. Soledad Aprea, Julieta S. Riva, O. Fernando Silva, Paula G. Bercoff and myself, which we would appreciate to be considered for publication in Catalysis Science & Technology.

The authors thank you and the reviewers for the revisions and appreciate their suggestions to improve this paper, which have all been taken into account in this resubmitted version. The new paragraphs are highlighted in yellow in the revised manuscript. All changes are detailed below:

Answers to Reviewer #1

1) The authors could indicate whether other modified cyclodextrins like Randomly methylated CDs could be used to stabilize FePd nanowires;

**We appreciate the reviewer's suggestion. We have not tested other modified cyclodextrins as stabilizers of FePd nanowires, we only report own results in our manuscript. We believe including results from other authors might be confusing for the reader.**

2) the following reference concerning the stabilization and the catalytic activity of metallic Nps by CDs bearing oleic grafts could be added in reference part : ChemCatChem 2020, 12, 1013–1018, DOI : 10.1002/cctc.201901837; 3) reference 28 is not complete: the full reference is : Environ. Chem. Lett. 2021, 19, 4327-4348. DOI: 10.1007/s10311-021-01298-5

**The reference ChemCatChem 2020, 12, 1013–1018, DOI : 10.1002/cctc.201901837 was added as reference 30 in the revised manuscript.**

**The reference indicated has been completed.**



Instituto de Investigaciones en Físicoquímica de Córdoba (INFIQC), CONICET  
Departamento de Química Orgánica, Facultad de Ciencias Químicas,  
Universidad Nacional de Córdoba.  
Haya de la Torre y Medina Allende, Ciudad Universitaria, X5000HUA, Córdoba. Argentina.  
TE: +54-351-5353867 ext: 53344  
e-mail: ale.granados@unc.edu.ar  
Alejandro M. Granados

## Answers to Reviewer #2

(1) The format of the article is not standardized, the line spacing is not uniform, and the overall arrangement of text paragraphs and illustrations is chaotic. It is strongly recommended that the authors rearrange the format and content of the manuscript.

**We appreciate the reviewer's suggestion, the article's format has been completely standardized according to what the template provided by the publisher allows.**

(2) There are many figures, tables and formulas in the manuscript, and the distribution is very messy. The overall manuscript is very long and the text is not concise. It is recommended that some unimportant charts or formulas can be placed at the end of the article or supplementary information.

**Equations 3, 4, and Table 3 from the original manuscript were transferred to the SI as Equations S1, S2 and Table S1.**

(3) The key points and innovations in the manuscript are not prominent. The authors should highlight the superiority of FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 compared with other Pd-based catalysts.

**The key to a deeper understanding of the alloy-composition effect on FePd NWs catalytic activity lies in a thorough characterization and analysis of the alloy surface, as well as in the interpretation of the dynamics of the reactions that occur on these surfaces by kinetic methods. We have highlighted this aspect as well as the superiority of FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 compared with other Pd-based catalysts in the revised manuscript, in the Introduction and Discussion Sections.**

(4) The authors should tell what the Pd coordination state is because the properties of Pd can be greatly influenced by the local coordination environment.

**We are aware that there might be another possible reason for the enhanced performance of Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> and Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub> NW@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 catalyst, however, a more comprehensive understanding of the Pd-Fe surface structure and catalytic performance at an atomic scale**



Instituto de Investigaciones en Físicoquímica de Córdoba (INFIQC), CONICET  
Departamento de Química Orgánica, Facultad de Ciencias Químicas,  
Universidad Nacional de Córdoba.

Haya de la Torre y Medina Allende, Ciudad Universitaria, X5000HUA, Córdoba. Argentina.

TE: +54-351-5353867 ext: 53344

e-mail: ale.granados@unc.edu.ar

Alejandro M. Granados



requires additional studies to investigate the electronic state and local coordination chemistry of Pd/Fe atoms, and this is beyond the scope of this paper. In any case, the following paragraph was added so that the point does not remain undiscussed.

It is evident that particular Pd-Fe alloys have Pd and Fe modified electronic structures that seem appropriate for catalysis. As it has been reported by several spectroscopic and computational investigations, the catalytic performance of bimetallic catalysts is strongly dependent on the coordination environment of the active sites.<sup>52,53</sup> For instance, Pd-Au bimetallic nanoparticles (with Au/Pd ratios of 40 and greater) expose isolated atoms (i.e. monomers) and oligomeric Pd atoms on the nanoparticles surfaces which provide selective stabilization of transition states for H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> during catalytic reduction of O<sub>2</sub> to H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>.<sup>54,55</sup>

(5) There are many errors in the manuscript, for example, FePd NWs @βCDMOD14, sometimes as FePd NW @βCDMOD14, the picture annotation is Figure, and the text description is Fig., Table 1 the writing format of Fe<sup>3+</sup> and Pd<sup>2+</sup> is wrong, Figure 7 the horizontal coordinate is asymmetrical and so on.

Annotations and descriptions of figures and tables have been standardized, as well as the figures format and samples labeling. The ion nomenclature and Figure 7 have been corrected.

(6) The conclusion is too long and should be shortened.

The conclusion has been shortened in the revised version.

(7) The reference format is not uniform.

The reference format has been standardized.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alejandro M. Granados', is shown on a light blue background.

Alejandro M. Granados

## ARTICLE

## FePd nanowires modified with cyclodextrin as improved catalysts: Effect of the alloy composition on colloidal stability and catalytic capacity.

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Elisa Herrera,<sup>a,b</sup> Julieta Riva,<sup>c</sup> Soledad Aprea,<sup>c,d</sup> O. Fernando Silva,<sup>a,e</sup> Paula G. Bercoff<sup>c,d</sup> and Alejandro M. Granados<sup>\*a,e</sup>

In the present work, FePd nanowires of different compositions, namely Fe<sub>85</sub>Pd<sub>15</sub>, Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub>, Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> and Fe<sub>0</sub>Pd<sub>100</sub>, were synthesized by electrodeposition into the nanopores of alumina membranes. The samples were characterized by XRD, SEM, EDS, XPS, and magnetometry. The surface of the nanowires was functionalized with a cyclodextrin derivative ( $\beta$ CDMOD14) to obtain stable aqueous dispersions. A comprehensive study about the relationship between the alloy composition and the catalytic capacity of FePd nanowires (FePdNWs) modified with  $\beta$ CDMOD14 was conducted through the analysis of the rate constants ( $k_{\text{obs}}$ ) of the reduction reaction of 4-nitrophenol to 4-aminophenol with sodium borohydride mediated by the FePdNWs in water. The highest value of  $k_{\text{obs}}$  was observed for Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> NWs, but the catalytic performance of Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub> NWs was similar to the previous one, in spite of its lower Pd content. The presence of Fe atoms and the synthesis method promotes the formation of an *fcc* phase in the alloy, which shows higher catalytic activity than pure Pd, possibly because of a synergistic effect exerted by Fe. The catalysts can be easily recovered by taking advantage of their magnetic properties to be reused after reactivation with  $\beta$ CDMOD14.

### Introduction

The catalytic capacity of Pd has been widely demonstrated and this element has been successfully employed as a catalyst in chemical reactions which involve hydrogen or oxygen release. In that sense, there is evidence that Pd is able to store these atoms due to the nature of its crystalline structure.<sup>1–8</sup> As a consequence of the high surface/volume ratio that nanoparticles (NP) and nanowires (NWs) exhibit,<sup>4,9</sup> Pd nanostructures would appear as excellent materials for their use as catalysts.<sup>10</sup> However, because of the aforementioned advantages, in the last decades, the increasing interest in palladium was also accompanied by a price rise.<sup>1–5,10,11</sup> Additionally, the environmental and human health damage related to its accumulation is still not well-known.<sup>12,13</sup> So, the study of nanocatalysts in which Pd is combined with other

compounds such as metals, non-metals, oxides, organic molecules, or composites is interesting, in order to decrease the amount of Pd used in the catalyst. Furthermore, if possible, the designed nanocatalyst should be recoverable for reuse by applying a simple procedure.<sup>6,14</sup> Several combinations of metals have been used to synthesize nanoparticles in which a magnetic element is present so that they can be easily recovered from the reaction medium after the catalysis reaction occurs, thereby simplifying the stage of separating the catalyst from the reaction product.<sup>14–18</sup> Also, in some cases, a synergistic effect between Pd and the magnetic metals has been postulated. That behavior was firstly observed and reported for Pt-M NP (where M is a transition metal) by Stamenkovic et al. who showed that PtNi NP were 10 times more active for oxygen reduction reaction (ORR) than pure Pt NP, also increasing the stability of the catalyst.<sup>1</sup> Liu et al. studied the effect of overlapping FePd sheets on a top layer of pure Pd in the ORR and they found that the catalytic activity was increased and the lattice parameters of Pd were modified as a result of the presence of the FePd alloy.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, Jiang et al. evaluated the catalytic activity of FePd@Pd core/shell NP, finding that it increased as the shell thickness increased up to a critical value, over which the influence of the core was weak and the catalytic activity decreased.<sup>20,21</sup>

In order to obtain an optimal catalyst, several characteristics of the material are relevant such as its morphology and crystallinity, as well as the composition. Therefore, a complete characterization is crucial in the process for selecting the catalyst because it enables determining the appropriate

<sup>a</sup> Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. Facultad de Ciencias Químicas. Departamento de Química Orgánica. Córdoba, Argentina.

<sup>b</sup> Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, CONICET. Instituto Nacional del Agua, Subgerencia Centro de la Región Semiárida (INA-SCIRSA). Córdoba, Argentina.

<sup>c</sup> Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. Facultad de Matemática, Astronomía, Física y Computación.

<sup>d</sup> Instituto de Física Enrique Gaviola, IFEG. Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, CONICET. Córdoba, Argentina.

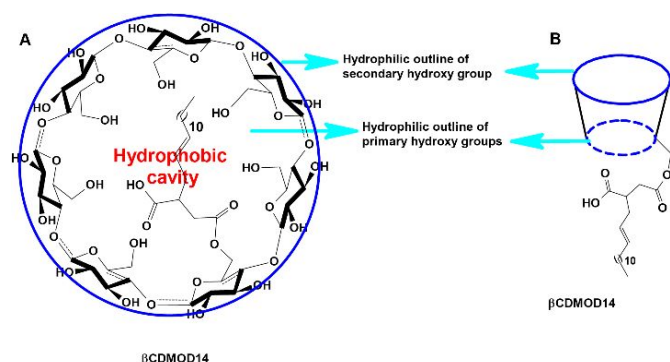
<sup>e</sup> Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, CONICET. Instituto de Investigaciones en Físicoquímica de Córdoba, INFIQC. Córdoba, Argentina.

Electronic Supplementary Information (ESI) available: [Experimental details including EDS UV-vis spectrum, kinetics processed by using Origin, The Taylor series expansion and the determination of S (PDF)]. See DOI: 10.1039/x0xx00000x



synthesis parameters, which generally control the catalytic behavior of the nanostructures<sup>1,2,19,20</sup>. In the previously mentioned reports, Stamenkovic et al. studied bimetallic Pt<sub>3</sub>Ni NP and found that (111) crystalline planes are considerably more active in ORR than the low-index planes (100) and (110).<sup>1</sup> These differences in catalytic activity between different phases have also been observed in FePd alloys, whose superficial layer's crystalline phase might be determinant in the resulting catalytic properties. In any case, as far as we have been able to compare, this capacity is always greater for the alloy than for pure Pd.<sup>22–25</sup> One of the key factors for the formation of the adequate crystalline phases that promote catalysis in a desired nanostructure is the material's synthesis process. In that sense, electrodeposition into the nanopores of ordered anodic aluminum oxide is a low-cost technique that may also facilitate the formation of the desired crystalline phases of the electrodeposited materials.<sup>26,27</sup>

One of the aims of this work is to obtain a nanocatalyst for uses in aqueous media. However, it is widely known that the metallic nanostructures coalesce in this condition. In order to avoid that undesirable effect, which decreases the active surface in the catalyst, a stabilizer such as Cyclodextrins (CDs) can be added on the surface of the nanostructure.<sup>28–30</sup> CDs are macrocyclic compounds formed by  $\alpha$ -D-glucopyranose units bonded by  $\alpha$ -1,4-glycosidic bonds which have a hydrophobic internal cavity and a hydrophilic external surface; they are an accessible and non-toxic alternative to other stabilizers. An additional exceptional feature is their ability to form reversible host-guest complexes with particular compounds, thereby facilitating catalytic transformations.<sup>31</sup> CDs and their derivate are adsorbed on the surface and give excellent colloidal stability to the nanostructures. We have recently reported the remarkable effect of  $\beta$ CDMOD14 (see Scheme 1)<sup>32</sup> on the colloidal stability and catalytic activity of Pd NP (Pd NPs)<sup>33</sup> and Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> NWs (Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> NWs).<sup>29</sup>



**Scheme 1.** A: Chemical structure of  $\beta$ CDMOD14 and its hydrophilic/hydrophobic zones. B: Schematic representation of  $\beta$ CDMOD14.

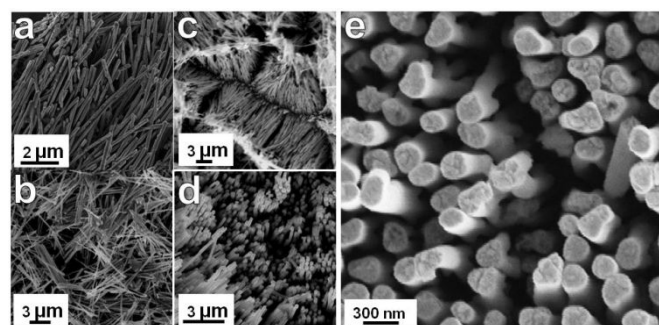
The reduction of 4-nitrophenol (4-NP) to 4-aminophenol (4-AP) has been frequently used as a model reaction in order to evaluate the catalytic activity of metal NPs due to the simple and accurate procedure for measuring the reaction progress

by UV–vis spectroscopy. Two distinct mechanisms for 4-NP reduction in presence of NPs are worth mentioning: (a) a surface-mediated electron transfer and (b) a surface-mediated hydrogen transfer. According to the postulated models, both mechanisms have the same requirement of a surface where the reduction process takes place.<sup>34</sup>

In this work, we estimate the threshold percentage (100-x) of Pd in Fe<sub>x</sub>Pd<sub>(100-x)</sub> NWs that is needed to improve the catalytic effects in the previously-mentioned reduction reaction, as an important pathway for preparation of low-cost, highly active and stable catalysts. In particular, we focus on an atomic Fe/Pd ratio higher than 1 in order to promote an efficient, easily-recovering, and economic catalyst that may reduce the environmental impact; these are additional key parameters in catalytic studies. A plausible interpretation of the  $\beta$ CDMOD14 coating in increasing the catalytic activity of these surfaces is also proposed, in order to deepen the knowledge about the catalytic processes. This work shows that  $\beta$ CDMOD14 coating plays a key role by shielding the NWs surface from aggregation and increasing the catalytic activity through the formation of inclusion complexes with 4-NP. We also propose a possible explanation of the effect that the FePd alloy composition has on the colloidal and catalytic behavior. The findings not only allow the identification of key steps involved in the catalytic reaction on the NWs surface, but also open an avenue towards the rational design of improved catalysts.

## Results and Discussion

Figure 1 displays SEM images taken from the samples after partially dissolving the AAO template. The obtained NWs replicate the pores' morphology, with uniform and smooth surfaces. The difference in composition does not modify the NWs shape, being the mean length L different, depending on composition (see Table 1). As expected, the NWs diameters are approximately 200 nm, the same diameter as the pores of the alumina template.



**Figure 1.** SEM images of different composition NWs. a) Pd b) Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> c) Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub> d) and e) Fe<sub>85</sub>Pd<sub>15</sub>.

The chemical compositions were obtained by taking the average of several EDS spectra (Figure S1) measured in

different areas of each FePd NWs sample, and are listed in Table 1.

The crystalline structure of the as-electrodeposited NWs was studied by X-ray diffraction (XRD), and the X-ray diffractograms of the FePd NWs inside the AAO template are shown in Figure 2.

**Table 1.** Fe<sup>3+</sup> and Pd<sup>2+</sup> concentrations of the solutions used to synthesize the NWs<sup>a</sup>, composition in at. % of Fe<sup>0</sup> and Pd<sup>0</sup> determined by EDS<sup>b</sup>, and length *L*<sup>c</sup> determined by SEM images.

[Fe <sup>3+</sup> ] mM / [Pd <sup>2+</sup> ] mM <sup>a</sup>	Composition at%. <sup>b</sup>	Length <i>L</i> <sup>c</sup> [±2 μm]
8.33 / 0.67	Fe <sub>85</sub> Pd <sub>15</sub>	8
6.67 / 1.33	Fe <sub>65</sub> Pd <sub>35</sub>	22
5.00 / 2.00	Fe <sub>55</sub> Pd <sub>45</sub>	13
0 / 4.00	Fe <sub>0</sub> Pd <sub>100</sub>	10

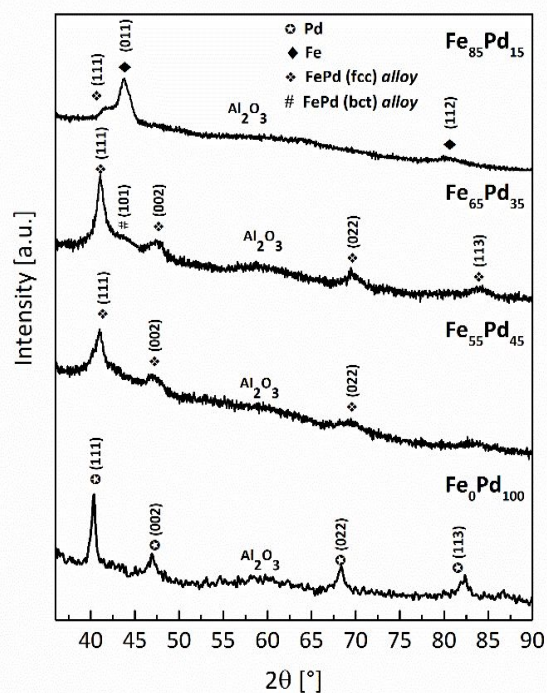
<sup>c</sup> The diameter of the NWs of all compositions was approximately 200 nm, as determined by the pore diameter of the AAO membranes.

alloy. In Fe<sub>85</sub>Pd<sub>15</sub>, the most intense peak of α-Fe corresponding to the reflection of plane (011) is also detected, which

**Table 2.** XRD and magnetic parameters.

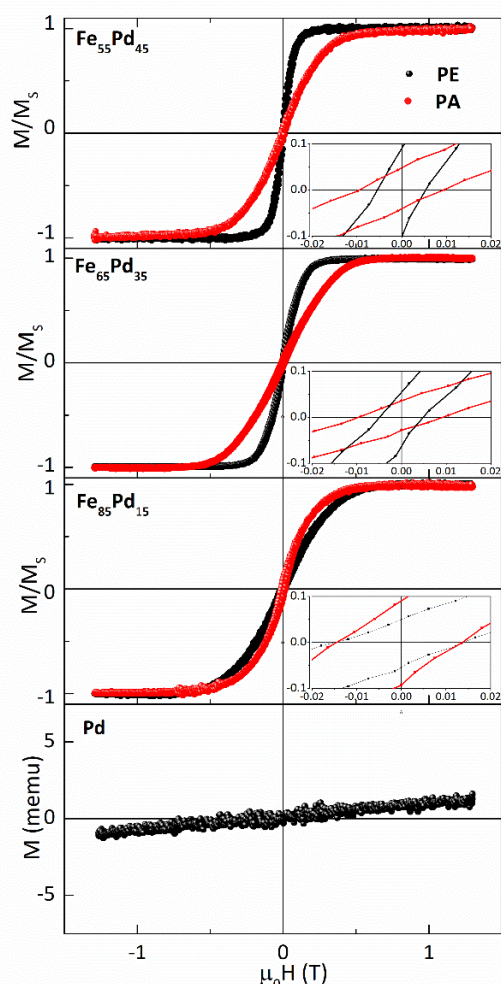
Samples	a [Å]	a [Å]	d <sub>Sch</sub>	(μ <sub>0</sub>	(μ <sub>0</sub>	Mr	Mr
	FePd alloy	Fe	[nm]	Hc±2)	Hc±2) ⊥		⊥
Fe <sub>85</sub> Pd <sub>15</sub>	3.7746	2.9318	13±2	13	14	0.10	0.05
Fe <sub>65</sub> Pd <sub>35</sub>	3.8436		8±2	5	10	0.06	0.04
Fe <sub>55</sub> Pd <sub>45</sub>	3.8465		6±2	5	10	0.08	0.05
Fe <sub>0</sub> Pd <sub>100</sub>	3.8963		14±3				

Lattice parameter *a*, and crystallite size *d* estimated from XRD patterns. Coercive field, μ<sub>0</sub>H<sub>c</sub>, and relative magnetic remanence, Mr, corresponding to the external field applied, parallel (||) and perpendicular (⊥) to the NWs long axis are shown.



**Figure 2.** XRD of as-deposited Fe<sub>85</sub>Pd<sub>15</sub>, Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub>, Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> and Fe<sub>0</sub>Pd<sub>100</sub> NWs arrays in AAO templates of 200 nm diameter.

The as-deposited pure Pd NWs have an *fcc* structure and grow preferentially along the (022) crystal direction, which corresponds to the peak at 2θ=68.44°. For the alloyed FePd NWs, the peaks observed around 41°, 47° and 68° are associated to reflections from the (111), (002) and (022) planes of a γ-FePd disordered phase.<sup>35</sup> The lattice parameter *a* and the average crystal size *d*<sub>Sch</sub> in each sample (calculated using the Scherrer formula), are shown in Table 2. In Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> and Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub> NWs, all the observed peaks correspond to a Fe–Pd



**Figure 3.** Hysteresis loops of Fe-containing NWs arrays measured parallel (PA) and perpendicular (PE) to the applied magnetic field. Insets: close-up of the low-field region. The bottom graph corresponds to pure Pd NWs, which display a paramagnetic behavior.



indicates that  $\alpha$ -Fe and *fcc* Fe–Pd alloy phases coexist in this case.

Figure 3 shows the room temperature magnetic hysteresis loops corresponding to the different FePd NWs arrays ordered inside the AAO template. The normalized magnetic moment vs. magnetic field was measured with the applied magnetic field parallel (PA) and perpendicular (PE) to the NWs long axis. As it can be seen, the magnetic easy axis is along the NWs long axis, as expected when shape anisotropy is important. In sample Fe<sub>85</sub>Pd<sub>15</sub> this effect is reduced possibly because of Fe segregation, as confirmed by XRD results.

All the Fe-containing samples exhibit soft magnetic behavior with modest coercivities of around 10 mT in both PA and PE configurations. Pecko *et al.* have obtained similar values of coercivity for Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> NWs with a diameter of 200 nm.<sup>36,37</sup> In every case, remanence is low in both configurations, resulting in a fast loss of magnetization when the external magnetic field is removed. Both in Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub> and in Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> the response to the external field is faster when it is applied parallel to the NWs axis. In the case of Pd NWs, a paramagnetic behavior is observed, as expected for this element.

Figure 4 shows the survey spectrum of Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub> NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14, which was acquired after etching the surface with an ion beam in order to eliminate the adsorbed  $\beta$ CDMOD14 molecules. The presence of Pd, Fe and some adventitious C are confirmed. Atomic % composition, calculated from this spectrum, confirms the results obtained by using EDS data (Table S1).

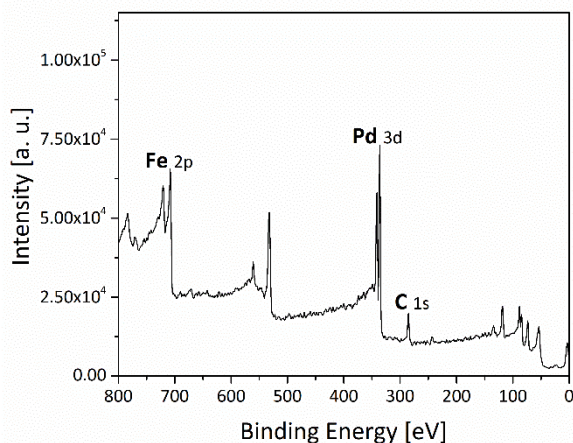


Figure 4. Survey spectrum of Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub> NWs.

Figure 5 shows high-resolution spectra corresponding to Pd 3d and Fe 2p signals from Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub>NWs after etching. The peaks' asymmetrical shape and the split of 5.3 eV between the peaks corresponding to Pd 3d 3/2 and 3d 5/2, as well as the split of 10.4 eV between Fe 2p 1/2 and 2p 3/2, confirm the presence of the metallic form of these species. Pd signal values were slightly shifted, in +0.9 eV: 335.9 eV and 341.2 eV (335.0 eV and 340.3 eV were expected) which has been reported as an effect of the compressive lattice strain in Pd by alloying with

Fe. The signal values for Fe were 706.9 eV and 720.4 eV, as it was expected<sup>17,38</sup>

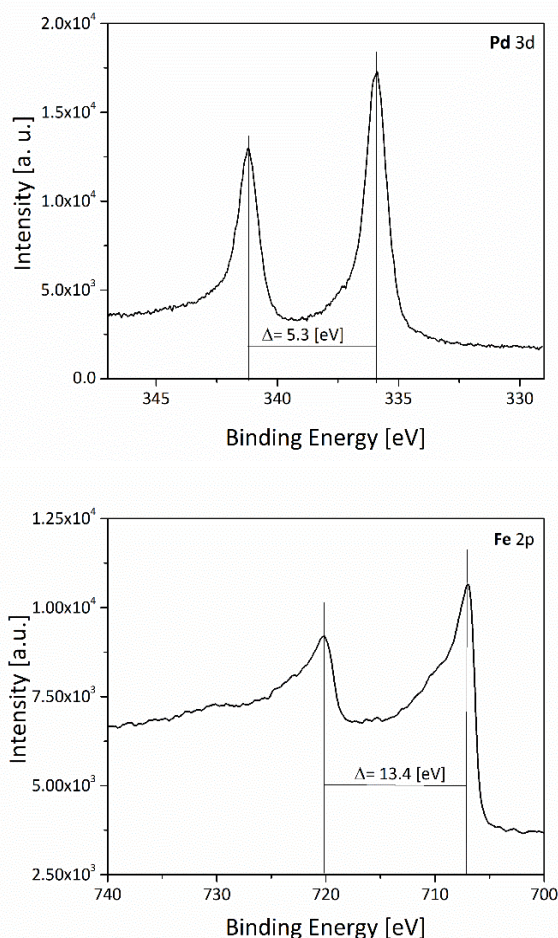


Figure 5. Full scan of Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub> NWs high-resolution spectra for Pd 3d (top) and Fe 3p (bottom).

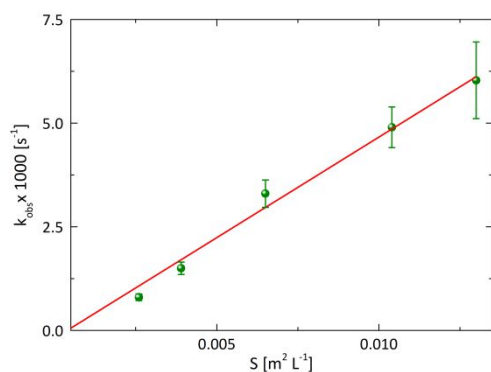
**Catalytic studies.** In order to evaluate the catalytic performances of Fe<sub>x</sub>Pd<sub>100-x</sub> ( $x = 0, 55, 65, 85$ ) NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 (FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14), the catalysts were used in the reduction of 4-NP under the presence of NaBH<sub>4</sub> in aqueous medium. The UV–vis spectra of the 4-NP and NaBH<sub>4</sub> mixture with FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 show a strong absorption peak around 400 nm, which is attributed to the formation of 4-NP<sup>-</sup> anion. This peak decreases as the reaction proceeds, and a band centered at 300 nm corresponding to the product 4-AP appears (Figure S2). The appearance of an isosbestic point at 314 nm indicates that there is no accumulation of any reaction intermediate. All the results exposed in this section were obtained by using this reaction.

For the experimental conditions used in this work, we assumed: 1) the concentration of NaBH<sub>4</sub> does not change during the reaction due to its large excess with respect to 4-NP, thus the reduction rate constant ( $k_{obs}$ ) was obtained by plotting  $\ln(Abs_t/Abs_{t=0})$  versus time (t) measuring absorbance values at 400 nm, and 2)  $k_{obs}$  is proportional to the parameter

$S$  (the total surface) of all FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 in the systems, as plotted in Figure 6.

The parameter  $S$  was used to evaluate the dependence of  $k_{\text{obs}}$  on the catalysts area.  $S$  is defined as the catalyst area per unit volume of reaction medium and it is calculated from the catalyst's geometrical and physical parameters and the final volume of the reaction medium (see SI).

Hence,  $k_{\text{obs}}$  values are strictly proportional to the total surface of FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14; the kinetic constants  $k_{\text{obs}}$  and  $S$  are



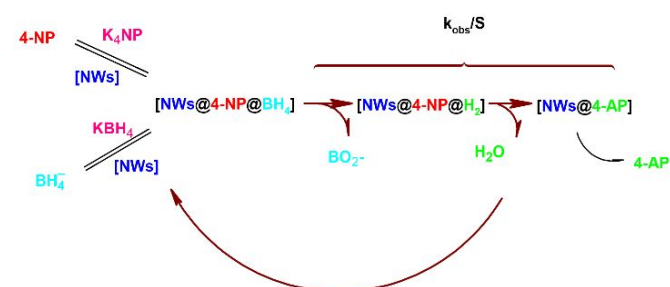
**Figure 6.** Surface dependence of  $k_{\text{obs}}$  as a function of the total surface  $S$  for  $\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$  NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14, at  $[\text{NaBH}_4] = 0.1 \text{ M}$ .

related through Eq.1:

$$-\frac{d[4-\text{NP}]}{dt} = k_{\text{obs}}[4-\text{NP}] = k_1 S [4-\text{NP}] \quad \text{Eq. 1}$$

where  $[4-\text{NP}]$  is 4-nitrophenol concentration,  $k_1$  ( $\text{s}^{-1}\text{m}^{-2}\text{L}$ ) is the rate surface constant and  $S$  ( $\text{m}^2\text{L}^{-1}$ ) is the total surface area of FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14. In order to compare different catalysts, it is useful to calculate the ratio  $k_{\text{obs}}/S$ , since this quantity is independent from geometrical factors and the mass of catalyst used in the experiment. Scheme 2 is a representation of the interactions and transformations involved in the catalytic reduction of 4-NP on the NWs surface.

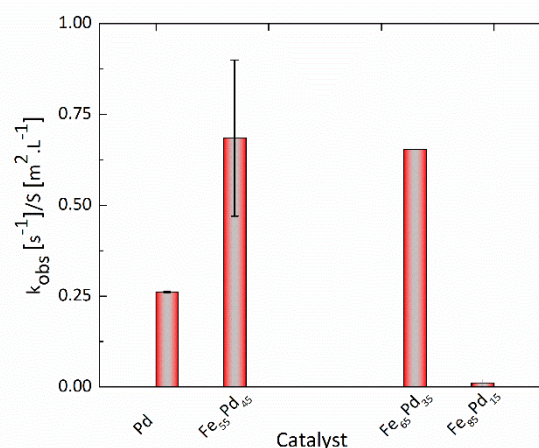
Figure 7 shows the  $k_{\text{obs}}/S$  values obtained for catalysts of all compositions. It is clear from the graph that  $k_{\text{obs}}/S$  values are remarkably larger for  $\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$  and  $\text{Fe}_{65}\text{Pd}_{35}$  NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14



**Scheme 2:** Interactions and transformations taken into account in the reduction reaction of 4-NP in presence of  $\text{NaBH}_4$  mediated by FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 (NWs in the scheme).

than for  $\text{Fe}_{85}\text{Pd}_{15}$ , and even pure Pd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14. It is also worth mentioning that we examined the  $k_{\text{obs}}$  of bare NWs, i.e. NWs without  $\beta$ CDMOD14 and we observed that  $k_{\text{obs}}$  values for these catalysts were about 10 times smaller than those obtained for FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14. It is likely that the relatively poor catalytic properties of bare NWs are due to their low colloidal stability in water, in contrast with higher colloidal stability of FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14.<sup>29</sup>

For a mechanistic analysis of the catalytic activity, we used the Langmuir–Hinshelwood model. Briefly, this model assumes that adsorption and desorption processes are fast and



**Figure 7.**  $k_{\text{obs}}/S$  for all the studied FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14. The reaction conditions were  $10^{-4} \text{ M}$  4-NP,  $0.1 \text{ M}$   $\text{NaBH}_4$  and  $50 \mu\text{L}$  of catalyst solutions.

reversible, therefore the transfer of hydrogen or electrons occurs from NWs to 4-NP, producing 4-AP that it is then dissociated from the surface (See Scheme 2).

Since the reaction rate depends on the surface coverage by the reactants, 4-NP and  $\text{BH}_4^-$ , it can be rewritten as:

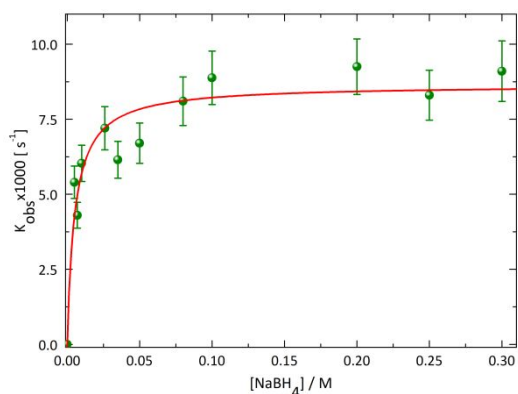
$$-\frac{d[4-\text{NP}]}{dt} = k_{\text{obs}}[4-\text{NP}] = k_1 S [4-\text{NP}] = k S \theta_{4-\text{NP}} \theta_{\text{BH}_4^-} \quad \text{Eq. 2}$$

where  $k$  is the catalytic rate constant,  $\theta_{4-\text{NP}}$  and  $\theta_{\text{BH}_4^-}$  correspond to the degree of surface coverage by 4-NP and  $\text{BH}_4^-$  respectively, and can be expressed using the Freundlich equilibrium isotherm shown in the SI, Eq. S1 and S2. Then,  $k_{\text{obs}}$  (Eq. (2)) can be rewritten as follows:

$$k_{\text{obs}} = \frac{kS\theta_{4\text{-NP}}\theta_{\text{BH}_4^-}}{[4\text{-NP}]} = \frac{kSK_{4\text{-NP}}^n [4\text{-NP}]^{n-1} (K_{\text{BH}_4^-} [\text{BH}_4^-])^m}{\left(1 + (K_{4\text{-NP}} [4\text{-NP}])^n + (K_{\text{BH}_4^-} [\text{BH}_4^-])^m\right)^2} \quad \text{Eq. 3}$$

where  $K_{4\text{-NP}}$  and  $K_{\text{BH}_4^-}$  are the adsorption equilibrium constants of 4-NP and  $\text{BH}_4^-$ , respectively. The constants  $n$  and  $m$  are named Freundlich exponents and take into account the energetic surface heterogeneity; when  $n=1$  and  $m=1$  there is adsorption sites homogeneity, and the equilibrium can be well described by a Langmuir isotherm.

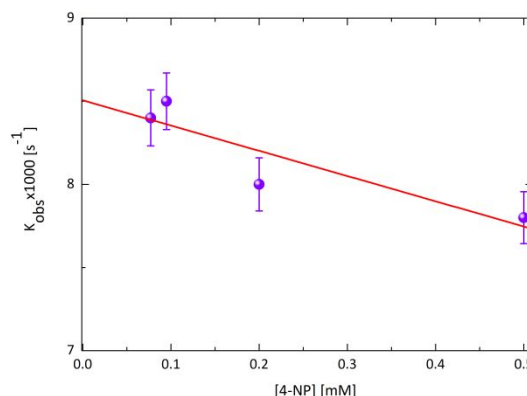
Figure 8 shows  $k_{\text{obs}}$  with variable concentrations of  $\text{NaBH}_4$  in presence of  $\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$  NWs@ $\beta\text{CDMOD14}$ . The values of  $k_{\text{obs}}$  increase with increasing concentration of  $\text{NaBH}_4$  until they reach a maximum value at concentrations  $\sim 0.1$  M  $\text{NaBH}_4$ , and then keep a constant value of  $k_{\text{obs}} = (0.009 \pm 0.001) \text{ s}^{-1}$ . It was suggested that competitive adsorptions between 4-NP and  $\text{BH}_4^-$  can influence the overall reaction rate and thus the reaction proceeds more quickly when the reactants' concentration is increased, until reaching the maximal rate. Afterwards, the reaction rate decreases because the defective reagent is displaced from the catalyst's surface.<sup>39</sup> We suggest that the plateau value for  $k_{\text{obs}}$  shown in Figure 8 is related to the active site saturation with molecular hydrogen. Given the fact that  $k_{\text{obs}}$  does not decrease after reaching the maximum value, this could indicate that 4-NP has a greater affinity for



**Figure 8.** Plot of  $k_{\text{obs}}$  vs.  $[\text{NaBH}_4]$  for the reduction reaction of 4-NP in presence of  $\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$  NW@ $\beta\text{CDMOD14}$ . Solid line: fitting curve using Eq. (5),  $r^2=0.90$  1.10-4M 4-NP, 50  $\mu\text{L}$  of catalyst solution.

the surface of  $\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$  NWs@ $\beta\text{CDMOD14}$  than for the reducing agent, and therefore, the latter is not able to move the 4-NP from active sites in the range of used  $\text{NaBH}_4$  concentrations. It should be noted that the behavior of the other FePd alloys NWs was similar to that shown in Figure 8 (see Figure 3 SI).

Figure 9 shows the effect of 4-NP increasing concentration on  $k_{\text{obs}}$  while keeping  $\text{NaBH}_4$  concentration constant ( $[\text{NaBH}_4] = 0.1$  M). As it can be observed, increasing 4-NP concentration decreases the degradation rate. These results are attributed to the displacement of hydrogen molecules by 4-NP from the



**Figure 9.** Plot of  $k_{\text{obs}}$  vs.  $[4\text{-NP}]$  for the reduction reaction with  $[\text{NaBH}_4] = 0.1$  M in presence of  $\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$  NWs@ $\text{CDMOD}$ . Solid line: fitting curve using Eq. (4),  $r^2=0.71$ . 50  $\mu\text{L}$  of catalyst solution.

active sites of  $\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$  NWs@ $\beta\text{CDMOD14}$ , which agrees with reports from other authors.<sup>34,39</sup>

The kinetics data of Figure 8 ( $k_{\text{obs}}$  vs.  $[\text{BH}_4^-]$  plot) were fitted using the Langmuir–Hinshelwood model to obtain kinetic parameters and the best fit values were obtained if the Freundlich exponents were  $n=1$  for 4-NP and  $m=1$  for  $\text{NaBH}_4$  and  $K_{4\text{-NP}} = 500 \text{ M}^{-1}$ . These values are similar than those obtained in a previous work, using Pd NPs@ $\beta\text{CDMOD14}$  instead of nanowires.<sup>33</sup> The fitting results corresponding to  $k$  and  $K_{\text{BH}_4^-}$  are shown in Table 3. On the other hand, the experimental data shown in Figure 9 ( $k_{\text{obs}}$  vs.  $[4\text{-NP}]$  plot) are not well represented by Eq. (3), likely due to the small variation of  $k_{\text{obs}}$  values observed in the  $[4\text{-NP}]$  range used. Therefore, in this case, we fitted the kinetics data using a first-order Taylor series approximation to Eq. (4) (see SI for details of the Taylor series expansion) around the point  $[4\text{-NP}] = 0$ :

$$k_{\text{obs}} \approx k_{\text{obs}}([4\text{-NP}] = 0) + \frac{\partial k_{\text{obs}}}{\partial [4\text{-NP}]}\bigg|_{[4\text{-NP}] = 0} [4\text{-NP}] \quad \text{Eq. 4}$$

The slope of the linear approximation shown in Eq. (4) is described by the following expression:

$$\frac{\partial k_{\text{obs}}}{\partial [4\text{-NP}]}\bigg|_{[4\text{-NP}] = 0} = \frac{-2k.S.(K_{4\text{-NP}})^2.(K_{\text{BH}_4^-} [\text{BH}_4^-])}{\left(1 + (K_{\text{BH}_4^-} [\text{BH}_4^-])\right)^3} = \text{slope} \quad \text{Eq. 5}$$

We calculated  $K_{4\text{-NP}}$  for  $\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$  NWs@ $\beta\text{CDMOD14}$  using Eq. (5), the experimental slope ( $\text{slope}_{\text{EXP}} = -(1.5 \pm 0.5 \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ M}^{-1})$ ) from Figure 8, and the values corresponding to  $k$ ,  $S$  and  $K_{\text{BH}_4^-}$  are listed in Table 4, together with the values of  $K_{4\text{-NP}}$  estimated for all FePd NWs@ $\beta\text{CDMOD14}$ .

The values of  $K_{\text{BH}_4^-}$  using FePd NWs@ $\beta\text{CDMOD14}$  as catalysts are in the same order of those reported in the literature for Pd NPs@ $\beta\text{CDMOD14}$  and other metallic NPs catalysts; however, we observe a slightly higher binding affinity for the catalysts containing 45% and 35% Pd.<sup>30</sup> These results show that  $\text{BH}_4^-$  anion has a lower affinity for the metal surface than 4-NP, and although the active sites on the surface of FePd



NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 become saturated with the reducing agent at  $[\text{NaBH}_4] = 0.1 \text{ M}$ , they cannot displace 4-NP even if  $\text{NaBH}_4$  concentration reaches a value of  $0.3 \text{ M}$ . The values of  $K_{4\text{-NP}}$  for FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 are in the same order of those reported previously for the constant of association of  $\beta$ -cyclodextrin with 4-NP in aqueous solution and Pd-NPs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14, which suggests that the Taylor series provides a good approximation.<sup>40–42</sup> It seems that cyclodextrin as a ligand plays two important roles in the performance of the catalyst: 1) improving colloidal stability by avoiding agglomeration of the nanostructures, which gives a higher surface area of the catalyst and more active sites on the surface; and 2) increasing the surface concentration of 4-NP by providing a superficial anchor point for 4-NP and preventing its displacement once the surface of the catalyst is completely saturated with the reducing agent.

**Table 3.** Rate constants and adsorption constants of 4-NP and  $\text{BH}_4$  and the total surface area per unit volume ( $S$ ) of  $\text{Fe}_x\text{Pd}_{100-x}$  ( $x = 0, 55, 65, 85$ ) NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14.

Catalyst	$k$ [ $10^{-3} \text{ L M s}^{-1} \text{ m}^{-2}$ ] [a]	$K_{\text{NaBH}_4}$ [a]	$K_{4\text{-NP}}$ [ $\text{M}^{-1}$ ] [b]	$S$ [ $10^{-3} \text{ m}^2 \text{ L}^{-1}$ ] [c]
$\text{Fe}_{85}\text{Pd}_{15}$	$0.10 \pm 0.01$	$3 \pm 1$	n.d.	21
$\text{Fe}_{65}\text{Pd}_{35}$	$5.5 \pm 0.1$	$9 \pm 3$	$300 \pm 100$	7
$\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$	$6.3 \pm 0.5$	$10 \pm 2$	$300 \pm 100$	14
$\text{Fe}_0\text{Pd}_{100}$	$1.7 \pm 0.4$	$4 \pm 2$	$1000 \pm 300$	7

$k$ : catalytic rate constant.  $K_{4\text{-NP}}$  and  $K_{\text{BH}_4}$ : adsorption constants of 4-NP and  $\text{BH}_4^-$  respectively [a] A value of  $K_{4\text{-NP}} = 500 \text{ M}^{-1}$  was kept fixed during the fitting of Eq. (5) to the kobs [ $\text{BH}_4^-$ ] data.

[b] Values obtained from the linear approximation (Eq. 6).

[c] For calculation of  $S$  see Supplementary Information

n.d.: Not determined

We find that  $k$  values for  $\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$  and  $\text{Fe}_{65}\text{Pd}_{35}$  NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 are 3–4 times greater than  $k$  values for Pd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14, and 50–60 times greater than  $k$  values for  $\text{Fe}_{85}\text{Pd}_{15}$ , so it is clear that the presence of iron in a defined percentage in the structure is a favorable factor for the catalytic activity. A similar behavior was observed by others authors during the course of catalytic decomposition of  $\text{NaBH}_4$  using trimetallic  $\text{Ni}_x\text{Fe}_y\text{Pd}_{100-2x}$  ( $x = 25, 40, 45$ ) catalyst.<sup>43</sup> They observed that alloys with a 50% Pd content have positive effects on the hydrogen generation rate. The synergistic effect was attributed to the fact that Pd facilitated  $\text{H}_2$  activation and stabilization of metallic Fe.<sup>44,45</sup>

The synergistic effect was also found in other  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$  catalysts promoted by Fe and the addition of Pd. Pd atoms activated the surface for  $\text{H}_2$  adsorption, and Fe atoms adsorb and activate the substrate, *m*-cresol.<sup>47</sup> This seems a plausible explanation also for FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 because (1) *m*-cresol and 4-

NP have structural similarities (both can interact with Fe active in the same manner), and (2) it was proposed that during reduction reaction of 4-NP it is  $\text{H}_2$  rather than borohydride the reducing agent, therefore the variation in Pd content namely  $35\% < \text{Pd} < 45\%$  of FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 could result in the increase of  $\text{H}_2$  selectivity, as it was reported in other systems.<sup>23,24</sup>

It has also been proposed by other authors that electron-enriched metal active sites are necessary to facilitate the catalysis reaction and these electrons are provided by the alloying of Pd to the active metal sites.<sup>23,24</sup> The shift observed in the valence band of Pd 3d XPS spectra (Figure 5) for  $\text{Fe}_{65}\text{Pd}_{35}$  NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 suggests that the charge transfer between the constituent elements is appreciable upon alloy formation.<sup>48</sup> The same trend has been reported by other researchers, who have observed a positive shift with respect to pure Pd when the Pd–Fe alloy is formed and show that the alloying Fe atoms increase the electrocatalytic performance of the Pd–Fe catalyst for oxygen reduction, which may be attributed to the change in the electronic structure of Pd atoms, Pd–Pd bond length and surface composition of Pd in Pd–Fe/C catalysts.<sup>49–51</sup>

As it has been reported, H is preferentially adsorbed on FePd *fcc* (and *fct*) alloys;<sup>23–25</sup> this could explain that samples  $\text{Fe}_{65}\text{Pd}_{35}$  and  $\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$ , which are rich in the *fcc* phase, are the ones with the highest catalytic activity. Briefly, the authors explained that hydrogen is adsorbed and stored in the interstitial sites of these alloys, but when the hydrogen adsorption is above 10% it reacts to form mainly reversible hydrides, thus it was proposed for hydrogen storage. Furthermore, it has been shown that the energy gain when H is located in the Pd–Fe sites is greater than when it is positioned in the interstices of pure Fe or Pd. In addition, the H atoms that enter the interstitial sites form intermetallic hydrides, which prevent oxidation.<sup>49</sup> It is evident that particular Pd–Fe alloys have Pd and Fe modified electronic structures that seem appropriate for catalysis. As it has been reported by several spectroscopic and computational investigations, the catalytic performance of bimetallic catalysts is strongly dependent on the coordination environment of the active sites.<sup>52,53</sup> For instance, Pd–Au bimetallic nanoparticles (with Au/Pd ratios of  $\sim 40$  and greater) expose isolated atoms (i.e. monomers) and oligomeric Pd atoms on the nanoparticles surfaces which provide selective stabilization of transition states for  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  during catalytic reduction of  $\text{O}_2$  to  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ .<sup>54,55</sup>

Finally, from the comparison between  $k$  values for Pd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 catalyst and the value  $k \sim 1.50 \times 10^{-3} \text{ L s}^{-1} \text{ m}^{-2}$  obtained for Pd NPs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14,<sup>30</sup> it is possible to highlight the importance of the use of the parameter  $S$  in order to obtain catalytic constants that are independent from the quantity and morphology of the catalyst used.

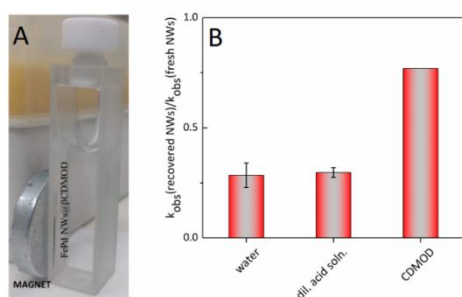
**Recovery test.** An important advantage of using FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 as catalysts is the ease of recovery from the reaction mixture and reusability of the Pd-containing nanocatalyst. Upon completion of the reaction, the magnetic

properties of the FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 provide a straightforward way to isolate the catalyst from the colloidal solution with the simple application of an external magnetic field, as shown in Figure 10A, which displays a photograph of FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 attracted by a magnet. In Figure 10B the  $k_{\text{obs}}$  (recovered NWs) /  $k_{\text{obs}}$  (fresh NWs) ratio is shown. The results indicate that the recovered Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 catalysts lost almost 70% of their initial activity after washing with water or diluted acid solution, however the loss of activity is less than 20% after washing with  $\beta$ CDMOD14 alkaline solution ( $[\beta\text{CDMOD14}] = 5.10^{-4}\text{M}$ , pH=9). This latter result is consistent with the above-mentioned role of cyclodextrins in the catalyst performance and it seems that some  $\beta$ CDMOD14

attached to the NWs surface is partly lost during the catalyst recycling. This can be restored by recycling with the addition of fresh  $\beta$ CDMOD14 alkaline solution. The catalyst can be recycled at least 3 times without losing its catalytic capacity.

## Conclusions

FePd nanowires with different compositions have been synthesized through a simple electrodeposition technique using AAO as templates, by changing the composition of the electrolyte. All Fe-Pd nanowires are ferromagnetic in the entire explored composition range and XRD analysis revealed that Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> and Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub> NWs are single-phase binary alloys with a disordered face centered cubic (fcc) crystalline structure. After surface modification using amphiphilic cyclodextrins, the colloidal stability of NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 in water was improved and they were used as catalysts for reduction of 4-NP in presence of NaBH<sub>4</sub> in aqueous medium.



**Figure 10.** A. Photograph of a magnet attracting FePd@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 NWs from the solution. B.  $k_{\text{obs}}$  recovered NWs /  $k_{\text{obs}}$  fresh NWs after washing with water, diluted acid solution and a solution of  $\beta$ CDMOD14 ( $[\beta\text{CDMOD14}] = 5.10^{-4}\text{M}$ , pH=9). A fresh solution of catalyst was used as reference.

Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> and Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub> NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 showed the highest catalytic performance, which was attributed to the presence of the fcc single-phase that improved the H-metal interaction at

the interfaces. This crystalline phase has a high H<sub>2</sub> selectivity, which is the reducing reagent generated in situ on the metal surface, probably due to the increasing of electron-enriched metal active sites upon the alloy. So, the alloy composition with-35% Pd results optimal for the studied reaction.

The possibility of recycling and reusing the material in consecutive catalytic cycles demonstrated that its initial activity still remains up to 80% after the third cycle. We believe that this relatively low-cost and recyclable catalytic system will promote new opportunities in the development of high-performance metal alloy catalysts.

## Experimental

### Materials and methods

**NWs synthesis and characterization.** NWs of different Fe/Pd compositions were prepared by template-assisted electrodeposition, using electrolytic baths of different Fe<sup>3+</sup> and Pd<sup>2+</sup> concentrations, (see Table 1) into the pores (200 nm diameter) of an anodic aluminium oxide (AAO) membrane.<sup>29</sup> The support electrolyte used was ammonium citrate, as the citrate complexes with Fe<sup>3+</sup>, and it is therefore stable at high pH values. Ammonium hydroxide was added to the solution, to keep the pH = 9.00, thus ensuring the presence of ammonium ions that form a complex with Pd<sup>2+</sup>. Prior to using as a template, a conductive thin gold layer was sputtered on one side of the membrane to be used as a cathode. A potential of -1.5 V was applied during 30 minutes for the electrodeposition in all cases. The chemical compositions of the resulting FePd NWs were determined by averaging several EDS spectra, taken after dissolving the alumina template (Figure 1 SI). The NWs morphology was observed in a Sigma Zeiss Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscope (FE-SEM). Crystalline phases were determined by X-ray diffraction (XRD) in a PANalytical Empyrean diffractometer using Cu K $\alpha$  radiation ( $\lambda = 1.5418 \text{ \AA}$ ) in the  $2\theta$  range from 30° to 90°. XPS experiments were carried out using a K-Alpha X-ray photoelectron spectroscope (Thermo-Fisher Scientific Co.) with a monochromatized Al-K $\alpha$  X-ray source in vacuum ( $10^{-9}$  mBar). All the magnetic measurements were carried out at room temperature in a Lakeshore 7300 vibrating-sample magnetometer (VSM), with a maximum magnetic field of  $\pm 1.3$  T, applied both parallel (PA) and perpendicular (PE) to the NWs major axis.

**Catalyst preparation.** In order to free the NWs from the alumina template, they were immersed in a 0.1 M NaOH solution for 6 h. Then, after rinsing twice the NWs with ultra-pure water, 1 mL of a  $5.10^{-4}$  M  $\beta$ CDMOD14 solution at pH 9.0 was added, and the NWs were kept in these conditions for 24 h. After that, the NWs were separated from the  $\beta$ CDMOD14 solution by rinsing several times to remove the  $\beta$ CDMOD14 excess. For the washing process, the NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14 were retained with a magnet, eliminating the remaining liquid. Later, 2 mL of ultra-pure water was added. The so-obtained solution is henceforth called 'catalyst solution'. The adsorption of  $\beta$ CDMOD14 on the NWs surface was assumed due to the high colloidal stability of the NWs after treatment with the



βCDMOD14 and based on a previous work in which, following the same experimental procedure, the adsorption of βCDMOD14 on the surface of Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> NWs was confirmed by IR-ATR and XPS.<sup>29</sup>

**Reduction reaction mediated by NWs.** To study the reduction reaction, 0.3 mL of a 1 M NaBH<sub>4</sub> stock solution was added into 2.5 mL of water, 25 μL of 1.10<sup>-4</sup> M 4-NP and 50 μL of catalyst solution in an UV-vis quartz cell. Under the reaction conditions, 4-nitrophenolate (4-NP<sup>-</sup>) is the predominant species, so the absorbance changes were measured at its absorption maximum of 400 nm every 2 seconds. In order to be able to observe the effect of the reagents and the different catalysts on the reaction kinetics, different series of experiments were carried out varying the concentration of NaBH<sub>4</sub>, 4-NP and the volume of catalyst solution used.

### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

### Acknowledgements

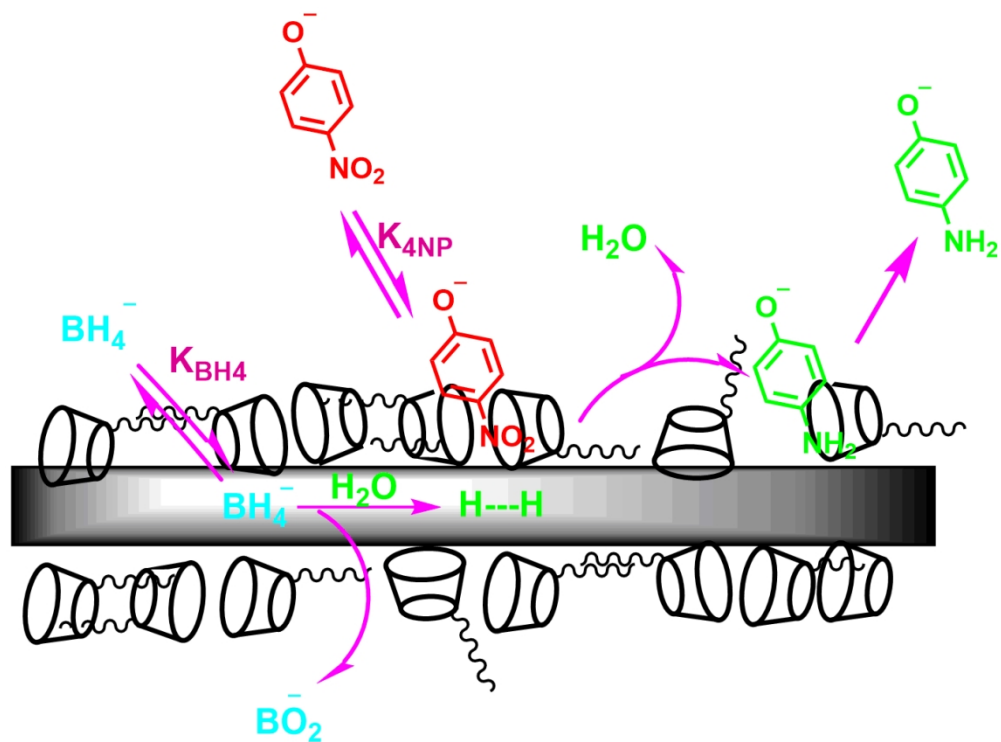
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944x705mm (38 x 38 DPI)

*Supplementary Information***FePd nanowires modified with cyclodextrin as improved catalysts: Effect of the alloy composition on colloidal stability and catalytic.**

Elisa Herrera,<sup>a,b</sup> Julieta Riva,<sup>c</sup> Soledad Aprea,<sup>c,d</sup> O. Fernando Silva,<sup>a,e</sup> Paula G. Bercoff<sup>c,d</sup> and Alejandro M. Granados<sup>\*a,e</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. Facultad de Ciencias Químicas. Departamento de Química Orgánica. Córdoba, Argentina.

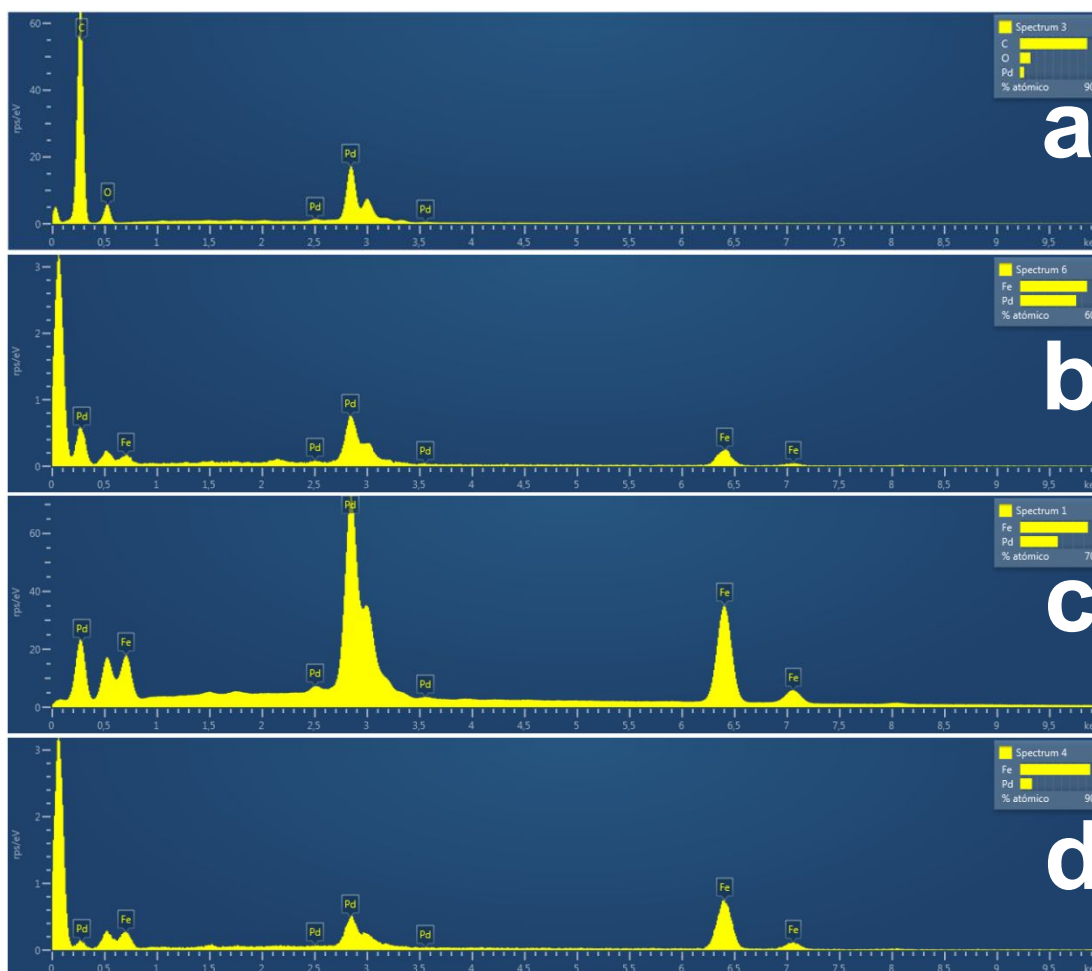
<sup>b</sup> Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, CONICET. Instituto Nacional del Agua, Subgerencia Centro de la Región Semiárida (INA-SCIRSA). Córdoba, Argentina.

<sup>c</sup> Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. Facultad de Matemática, Astronomía, Física y Computación.

<sup>d</sup> Instituto de Física Enrique Gaviola, IFEG. Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, CONICET. Córdoba, Argentina.

<sup>e</sup> Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, CONICET. Instituto de Investigaciones en Fisicoquímica de Córdoba, INFIQC. Córdoba, Argentina.

## 1. Energy Dispersive X-Ray Spectroscopy.



**Figure S1.**EDS spectra for FePd NWs of different composition. a) Pd b)  $\text{Fe}_{55}\text{Pd}_{45}$  c)  $\text{Fe}_{65}\text{Pd}_{35}$  d) and e)  $\text{Fe}_{85}\text{Pd}_{15}$ .

**Table S1.** Atomic % composition, calculated from XPS data.

Element	Atomic%	Atomic% <sup>[a]</sup>
C	15.9	
Pd	30.0	35.6
Fe	54.1	64.4

[a]

atomic % recalculated without considering C.

## 2. UV.vis measurements



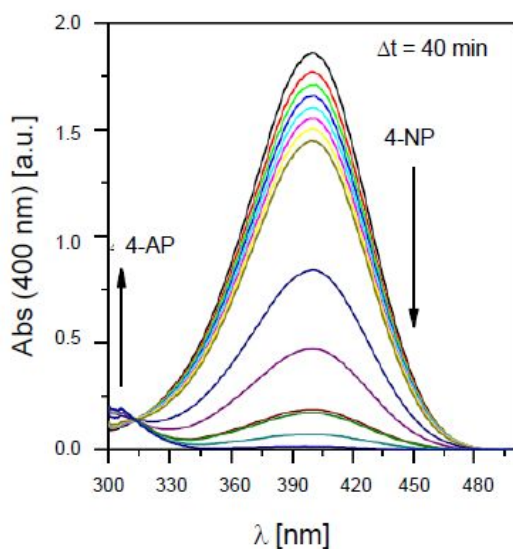


Figure S2. UV-vis spectra at different times of the reduction reaction of 4-NP  $10^{-4}$  M in aqueous solution containing  $\text{NaBH}_4$  0.1 M and FePd NWs@ $\beta$ CDMOD14

### 3. Catalytic studies

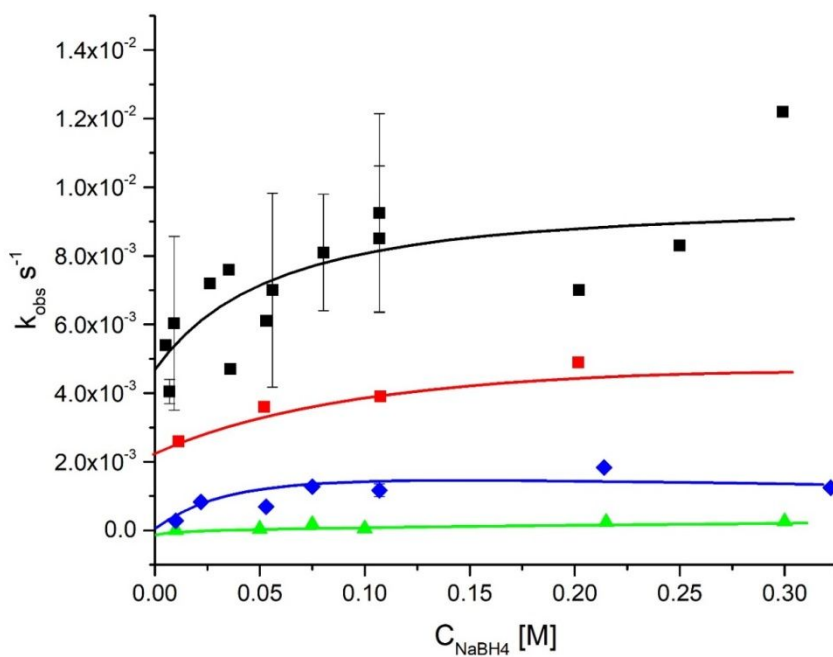


Figure S3.  $k_{\text{obs}}$  vs  $[\text{NaBH}_4]$  for reaction of 4-NP in presence of different alloys FePdNW@ $\beta$ CDMOD14. Fe<sub>55</sub>Pd<sub>45</sub> (black line), Fe<sub>65</sub>Pd<sub>35</sub> (red line), Pd (blue line) and Fe<sub>85</sub>Pd<sub>15</sub> (green line).

$$\theta_{4-NP} = \frac{(K_{4-NP}[4-NP])^n}{1 + (K_{4-NP}[4-NP])^n + (K_{BH_4}[BH_4^-])^n}$$

Eq.S1

$$\theta_{BH_4^-} = \frac{(K_{BH_4^-} [BH_4^-])^n}{1 + (K_{4-NP} [4-NP])^n + (K_{BH_4^-} [BH_4^-])^n} \quad \text{Eq.S2}$$

### 3.a. The Taylor series expansion

The deduction of formula (Eq. 6) is as follows: According Eq. 5, we consider that  $k_{obs}$  is a function of [4-NP] variable and described by a rational function,  $\frac{f}{g}$ , Eq.S3:

$$k_{obs} = \frac{f}{g} = \frac{kSK_{4-NP}K_{BH_4^-} [BH_4^-]}{(1 + K_{4-NP} [4-NP] + K_{BH_4^-} [BH_4^-])^2} \quad \text{Eq.S3}$$

Where  $f$  and  $g$  are described by Eq. S4 and Eq.S5 respectively,

$$f = (kSK_{4-NP}K_{BH_4^-} [BH_4^-]) \quad \text{Eq.S4}$$

$$g = (1 + K_{4-NP} [4-NP] + K_{BH_4^-} [BH_4^-])^2 \quad \text{Eq.S5}$$

We use the Taylor expansion around [4-NP]=0 to obtain a linear approximation of Eq.S3 by truncating at the first-order (Eq. S6)

$$k_{obs} \approx k_{obs}(0) + \frac{\partial k_{obs}}{\partial [4-NP]}(0) \cdot [4-NP] \quad \text{Eq. S6}$$

Where the first derivate ( $\frac{\partial k_{obs}}{\partial [4-NP]}$ ) was obtained through the derivatives of rational function and according to the following rule (Eq.S7):

$$\frac{\partial k_{obs}}{\partial [4-NP]} = \frac{f' \cdot g - f \cdot g'}{g^2} \quad \text{Eq.S7}$$

Where  $f'$  and  $g'$  are the derivatives of  $f$  and  $g$  respectively and described by Eq. S8 and Eq. S9

$$f' = 0 \quad \text{Eq. S8}$$

$$g' = 2 \cdot K_{4-NP} \cdot (1 + K_{4-NP} [4-NP] + K_{BH_4^-} [BH_4^-]) \quad \text{Eq. S9}$$

If we substitute Eq. S4, S5, S8 and S9 into Eq. (S7) evaluated at [4-NP]=0, we obtained the slope of the linear approximation of Eq. S6 which is described by Eq. S10

$$\frac{\partial k_{obs}}{\partial [4-NP]}(0) = \frac{-2 \cdot k \cdot S \cdot (K_{4-NP})^2 \cdot (K_{BH_4^-} [BH_4^-])}{(1 + (K_{BH_4^-} [BH_4^-]))^3} = slope \quad \text{Eq.S10}$$

### 3.b. Determination of S.

The theoretical value of  $S$  (the total surface area of FePdNWs normalized to the solution's unit volume) was determined through the following equations. Geometrical parameters of cylindrical NWs (length and diameter), were obtained experimentally (see Table S1).

$$S_{NW} = 2\pi r h + 2\pi r^2 \quad V_{NW} = \pi r^2 h$$

$$\rho_{Pd^0} = 12.02 \cdot 10^3 \frac{kg}{m^3} \quad \rho_{Fe^0} = 7.85 \cdot 10^3 \frac{kg}{m^3}$$

$$PM_{Pd^0} = 106.42 \text{ g/mol} \quad PM_{Fe^0} = 55.84 \text{ g/mol}$$

Where  $r=100\text{nm}$  is the NW radius, and  $L$  is their length (values in table S1),  $V_{NW}$  and  $S_{NW}$  are the volume and the surface of each individual NW, respectively,  $\rho_{Pd}$  and  $\rho_{Fe}$  are the density of  $Pd^0$  and  $Fe^0$ , respectively,  $PM_{Pd^0}$  and  $PM_{Fe^0}$  are the molar mass of  $Pd^0$  and  $Fe^0$ , respectively.

The density of each FePdNW composition ( $\rho_{Fe_{(100-x)}Pd_x}$ ), the individual mass ( $m_{NW}$ ), the total quantity ( $N$ ), the individual surface ( $S_{NW}$ ) and the surface in 'catalyst solution' ( $S_{cs}$ ) were calculated by using the follow equation and values obtained informed in Table S1.

$$\rho_{Fe_{(100-x)}Pd_x} = \frac{[\rho_{Fe} \cdot (100 - x)] + [\rho_{Pd} \cdot x]}{100}$$

(see Sec. 2.2)

$$m_{NW} = \rho_{Fe_{(100-x)}Pd_x} \cdot V_{NW}$$

$$S_{cs} = N \cdot S_{NW} / 2 \cdot 10^{-3} L$$

$$N = m_{NW} / m_{sample}$$

$$S_{cs} = S_{NW} / 2 \cdot 10^{-3}$$

Finally,  $S$  is the total surface which takes in account the dilution factor (50 $\mu\text{L}$  of NWs in 2.8mL)

Table S2: Geometrical parameters and constants for the different NWs alloys

Composition at%.	Length $L^a$ [ $\pm 2 \mu\text{m}$ ]	$V_{NW} \cdot 10^{-20}$ $\text{m}^3$	$\rho \cdot 10^3$ $\text{kg}/\text{m}^3$	$m_{NW} \cdot 10^{-12}$ g	m mg	$N \cdot 10^8$	$S_{NW} \cdot 10^{-12}$ $\text{m}^2$	$S \cdot 10^{-3}$ $\text{m}^2 \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$
Fe <sub>85</sub> Pd <sub>15</sub>	8	25.1	7.85	1.97	1.0 $\pm$ 0.1	5.1	5.1	21

Fe <sub>65</sub> Pd <sub>35</sub>	22	69.1	9.31	6.43	0.4±0.1	0.6	13.9	7
Fe <sub>55</sub> Pd <sub>45</sub>	13	40.8	9.73	3.97	0.8±0.1	2.0	8.2	14
Fe <sub>0</sub> Pd <sub>100</sub>	10	31.4	12.02	3.78	0.5±0.1	1.3	6.3	7

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