# **Supplementary information**

# **Combination of six enzymes of a marine** *Novosphingobium* **converts the stereoisomers of β-***O***-4 lignin model dimers into the respective monomers**

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# **Contents**

- I. Supplementary methods (page 2-14)
- II. Supplementary figures page (page 15-28)
- III. Supplementary tables (page 29-40)
- IV. Supplementary references (page 41-48)

# **I. Supplementary methods**

## **Synthesis of β-ether-linked model lignin dimers and associated metabolites**

1-(4-Hydroxy-3-methoxyphenyl)-2-(2-methoxyphenoxy)-1,3-propanediol

5 (guaiacylglycerol-β-guaiacyl ether; GGGE) and 3-hydroxy-1-(4-hydroxy-3-methoxyphenyl)-2-(2-methoxyphenoxy)-1-propanone ((2-methoxyphenoxy)hydroxypropiovanillone; MPHPV) were synthesized according to the method of Hosoya *et al.* (45). Briefly, the synthesis was initiated by the bromination of commercially available acetovanillone (1-(4-hydroxy-3-methoxyphenyl) -1-ethanone) to

- 10 produce 2-bromo-1-(4-hydroxy-3-methoxyphenyl) -1-ethanone. Keto aryl ether was formed via the displacement reaction of the bromine with the phenolate ion of guaiacol, affording 1-(4-hydroxy-3-methoxyphenyl)-2-(2-methoxyphenoxy) -1- ethanone. An aldol reaction with formaldehyde was used to produce MPHPV, which was then reduced with NaBH4 to obtain GGGE. 1-(3,4-Dimethoxyphenyl)-2-(2-methoxyphenoxy)-1,3-propanediol
- 15 (veratrylglycerol-β-guaiacyl ether; VGGE) and 3-hydroxy-1-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-2-(2-methoxyphenoxy)-1-propanone (β-guaiacyl-α-veratrylglycerone; GVG) were synthesized by a similar scheme as used for GGGE with minor modifications according to the description of Picart *et al.* (24). Briefly, acetoveratrone (1-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)ethan-1-one) was first brominated to produce
- 20 bromoacetoveratrone (2-bromo-1- (3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)ethan-1-one). Keto aryl ether was formed by the displacement of bromide with the phenolate ion of guaiacol, affording 1- (3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-2- (2-methoxyphenoxy)ethan-1-one. An aldol reaction with formaldehyde was used to produce GVG, which was then reduced with  $N$ a $BH<sub>4</sub>$  to obtain VGGE. The synthesized compounds were characterized and assigned using liquid
- 25 chromatography/mass spectroscopy (LC/MS) and  $^{13}$ C-NMR. LC/MS data were generated

using a Waters Xevo G2 quadrupole time-of-flight mass spectrometer operated in negative ion ESI mode. The inlet system was a Waters Acquity H-class UPLC system and was operated at a flow rate of 0.4 mL/min using a BEH C18 reverse phase column (1.8-µm particle size,  $100 \times$ 2.1 mm; Waters) using the mobile phase gradients A (2 mM sodium acetate and 0.05% formic

- 30 acid) and B (95% acetonitrile/H2O) under the following conditions: from 0–6 min, 95%-5% A with B as the remainder; and from 6–7 min, 100% B. The eluate was monitored at 270 nm using a Waters photo diode array (PDA) eλ detector. Data were acquired over the mass range of 100 to 1000 Da with a 0.45-s scan time using a desolvation temperature of 500  $^{\circ}$ C, source temperature of 150 °C and cone voltage of 30 V. Measured mono-isotopic mass (319.1 m/z)
- 35 was consistent with the calculated masses  $(M-H^+ GGGE/C_{17}H_{19}O_6; 319.1, VGGE/C_{18}H_{21}O_6;$ 333.1) from the molecular formulas of each compound (GGGE/  $C_{17}H_{20}O_6$ ; 320.1, VGGE/  $C_{18}H_{22}O_6$ ; 334.1). <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra of GGGE (Figure S7) and VGGE (Figure S8) were recorded on a Varian Inova 400- and 500-MHz spectrometer (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA, USA). Synthesized GGGE and VGGE had the following characteristic peaks:
- $[GGGE]$   ${}^{13}$ C-NMR (101 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  [ppm] 151.4 (C3'); 147.7 (C4'); 146.7 (C3); 145.6, 145.1 (C4); 131.8, 131.5 (C1); 124.3,124.2 (C1΄); 121.7, 121.7 (C6΄); 121.1, 121.0 (C6); 120.3, 119.1 (C5΄); 114.3, 114.3 (C5); 112.2 (C2΄); 109.5, 108.7, (C2); 89.6 (Cβ-threo), 87.4 (Cβ-erithro); 74.0(Cα-threo), 72.8 (Cα-erithro); 61.1(Cγ-threo), 60.8 (Cγ-erithro); and 56.0 / 55.9 (3΄-OMe / 3-OMe).
- [VGGE] 13 45 C-NMR (101 MHz, CDCl3) δ [ppm] 151.5(C3'-erithro); 151.2(C3'-threo); 149.0(C3); 148.9(C4-threo); 148.4 (C4-erithro); 147.6 (C4'-threo); 146.8 (C4'-erithro);132.5 (C1-erithro); 132.1 (C1-threo); 124.2, 124.1 (C1'); 121.7, 121.6 (C6'); 121.0 (C5'); 119.6 (C6-threo); 118.4 (C6-erithro); 112.1 (C2'); 111.0 (C5); 109.8 (C2-threo); 109.2 (C2-erithro); 89.4 (Cβ-threo); 87.3 (Cβ-erithro); 73.9 (Cα-threo); 72.6 (Cα-erithro); 61.0 (Cγ-threo); 60.7
- 50 (Cγ-erithro); and 55.9 (C-OMe).

Numbering of the atoms followed the scheme used in an earlier study  $(31)$ . The <sup>13</sup>C-NMR spectrum of synthetic GGGE (Figure S7) and VGGE (Figure S8) matched those deposited in the NMR Database of Lignin and Cell Wall Model Compounds

(http://ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/Place/36553000/software/NMR/NMR\_DB\_11-2004.pdf) 55 (46).

The ratios of stereoisomers in synthetic GGGE and MPHPV were determined by chiral chromatography based on the peak areas of the isomers. GGGE contained  $\alpha(S)\beta(R)$  GGGE, α(*R*)β(*S*) GGGE, α(*S*)β(*S*) GGGE, and α(*R*)β(*R*) GGGE at a ratio of 1:1:3:3. MPHPV contained β(*R*) MPHPV and β(*S*) MPHPV at a ratio of 1:1 (Figure S9). The analytical

60 conditions are described below in the Chiral chromatography section.

For the structural analysis of the unidentified metabolite from GGGE,

3-hydroxy-1-(4-hydroxy-3-methoxyphenyl)-1-propanone (guaiacyl hydroxyl propanone; GHP) was chemically synthesized via an aldol reaction. For the synthesis, NaOH 9.6 g (0.24 mol) was dissolved in 850 mL water in a 1-l Erlenmeyer flask, to which 33.2 g (0.20 mol)

- 65 acetovanillone followed by 19.5 g (0.24 mol) 37% formalin were added. The resulting reaction mixture was incubated at 40 °C for 3.5 h. Aqueous HCl was used to adjust the pH of the reaction mixture to approximately 3, and the unreacted acetovanillone crystal deposit was then removed by filtration. The filtrate was extracted twice with 300 mL ethyl acetate, which was then removed, yielding 9.3 g of crude product consisting of approximately 12% GHP. The
- 70 crude product was purified with silica gel (Wakogel C-200, Wako, Osaka, Japan) using ethyl acetate:toluene (1:4), followed by ethyl acetate:toluene (1:1). After removal of the solvent from the GHP-containing fractions, the obtained residue (1.6 g) was recrystallized from the ethyl acetate:toluene  $(1:1)$  to yield 0.8 g GHP with an HPLC purity of 99%. GHP was characterized by 2D COSY, HSQC, and HMBC. NMR spectra were recorded on a Varian Inova 500-MHz
- 75 spectrometer (Agilent Technologies). The NMR spectra had the following signals: <sup>1</sup>H-NMR

(500 MHz, CDCl3) δ [ppm]: 7.56-7.54 (m, 2H, H2/H6), 6.96 (d, 1H, *J =* 8.5 Hz, H5), 6.15 (s, 1H, phenol-OH), 4.04-4.01 (m, 2H, Hγ), 3.96 (s, 3H, 3-OMe), 3.19 (t, 2H, *J =* 5.3 Hz, Hβ), and 2.74 (t, 1H,  $\gamma$ -OH) (Figure S10a); <sup>13</sup>C-NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) δ [ppm]: 199.1 (C $\alpha$ ); 150.8 (C4); 146.7 (C3), 129.7 (C1); 123.7 (C6); 113.9 (C5); 109.6 (C2); 58.3 (Cγ); 56.1

80 (3-OMe), and 39.8 (Cβ) (Figure S10b).

**Strains and media.** *Novosphingobium* sp. strain MBES04 (NITE AP-01797) was grown aerobically with shaking at 30 °C in a basal medium consisting of Luria-Bertani (LB) medium supplemented with 5 mM MgSO4. For testing carbon utilization, a defined mineral medium

- 85 containing 1 mM of the test substrate as the sole carbon source was used. The mineral medium (100 mL) consisted of basal salt solution (33.9 g Na<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub>, 15.0 g KH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>, 10.0 g NaCl, and 5.0 g NH<sub>4</sub>Cl per liter of deionized H<sub>2</sub>O), 0.5 mL 1 M MgSO<sub>4</sub>, 1 mL of 0.25% (w/v) of Daigo's IMK medium (Wako), 1 mL trace vitamins solution, 1 mL of 100 mM substrate stock solution, and 86.5 mL deionized H2O. The trace vitamin solution was prepared according to Balch *et al.*
- 90 (51). Prior to use, the medium was sterilized using a 0.22-µm membrane filter. Substrate stock solutions of 100 mM GGGE, MPHPV, synaptic acid, ferulic acid, caffeic acid, 4-hydroxybenzoic acid, syringic acid, vanillic acid, vanillin, protocatechuic acid, and chlorogenic acid were prepared using N,N-dimethylformamide (DMF) as a solvent. Stock solutions of 100 mM sodium benzate arabinose and xylose were prepared in deionized  $H_2O$ .
- 95 Mineral medium containing 1 mM glucose with/without 1% (v/v) DMF was used as a positive control for growth. The growth of strain MBES04 was not affected by supplementation of the medium with 1% (v/v) DMF.

**Metabolism of a crude extract from milled wood.** *Quercus myrsinifolia* sawdust was 100 milled at 25,000 rpm for 2 min using a Wander blender (D3V-10, Osaka Chemical, Osaka,

Japan). The coarse grain was removed by passing the material through a 0.1-mm mesh sieve. A total of 10 g milled wood grain was immersed in 1 L dioxian-water (96:4) for 2 days at room temperature. The extract was recovered by filtration and dried under vacuum to obtain a crude lignin-rich material, which was then suspended in water at 0.4% (w/v) and autoclaved at

- 105 120 °C for 15 min. The suspension was filtered through a 0.22-µm membrane to obtain the water-soluble fraction, which was designated as WDM (water-soluble fraction of dioxan extract from milled wood). A quarter volume of WDM was added to basal medium as a low-molecular-weight lignin containing crude natural materials. Strain MBES04 was cultured using 10 mL WDM-supplied medium in triplicate. After 48-h cultivation, the culture broth was
- 110 centrifuged at  $10,500 \times g$  for 10 min to remove all cells and debris, and the obtained supernatant was analyzed by LC/MS. Control experiments were performed in triplicate using basal medium containing WDM without inoculation of strain MBES04 (control 1), and using basal medium without WDM, but with inoculation of the strain (control 2). All LC/MS loading data were analyzed with multivariate statistics using MarkerLynks XS software (Waters). An
- 115 OPLS-discriminant model was constructed and visualized in an S-plot to detect differences between the data obtained from the WDM-supplemented culture medium and those from the control experiments. Ten MS ions with high loadings  $(>0.05)$  and correlations  $(>0.9)$  were selected as possible metabolites from WDM and were used for quantification based on the peak area in the MS chromatograms. Metabolites were identified by comparing the retention
- 120 times and MS spectral patterns with those of GHP and SHP standards. Authentic SHP was purchased from Tokyo Fine Chemicals (Tokyo, Japan).

#### **Assessment of oxidase and peroxidase activities of strain MBES04.** The

supernatant of 48-h cultures of strain MBES04 grown in WDM-supplemented basal medium

125 was used for the assessment of oxidase and peroxidase activities of the strain. Oxidase activity

was assayed according to the method described in the literature for laccase (48) with minor modifications. Briefly, 0.5 mM 2,2'-azino-bis(3-ethylbenzothiazoline-6-sulphonic acid) (ABTS) and 1 mM 2,6-dimethoxyphenol (DMP) were used as substrates in reaction mixtures with and without  $0.5$  mM each of the divalent metal salts of FeSO<sub>4</sub>, CuSO<sub>4</sub>, and MnSO<sub>4</sub>. After

- 130 adding 40 µL of the culture supernatants to the assay mixtures to make a total volume of 200 µL, increases in absorbance at 420 and 480 nm for the ABTS and DMP assays, respectively, were monitored every hour for 4 h with a Powerscan HT microplate reader (Dainippon Pharmaceutical) at 25 °C. Peroxidase activity was assayed in the presence of 0.1 mM  $H_2O_2$ using the same substrates and metal ions for the oxidase assays. Uninoculated medium
- 135 incubated under the same conditions as the test cultures was used as a control for abiotic-induced changes in the absorbance.

**Preparation of expression plasmids and enzyme purification.** The whole-genome shotgun sequence of strain MBES04 was previously determined by our group (28). A total of

140 124 contigs were deposited at DDBJ/EMBL/GenBank under the accession numbers BBNP01000001 to BBNP01000124. Candidate GGGE-metabolizing genes of strain MBES04 were identified by querying all detected ORFs in the MBES04 draft genome with known GGGE-metabolizing genes of *Sphingobium* sp. SYK-6 (accession numbers NC\_015976/ Gene ID; BAK65539, BAK65541, BAK65540, BAK65542, BAK68041, BAK68265, BAK68263,

145 and BAK67935) using BLASTP with the following thresholds: coverage >60%, identity >25%, and similarity >50% (56). DNA fragments containing possible genes encoding GGGE-metabolizing enzymes and the expression vector pRSET A (Life Technologies, Carlsbad, CA, USA), which was used to add a His  $\times$  6 tag at the N-terminus of the target protein, were amplified by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) using PrimeSTAR GXL DNA

150 polymerase (Takara Bio, Ohtsu, Japan) and the primer sets listed in Table S1. The amplicons

## 7

of each ORF and the vector were ligated and cloned into competent *E. coli* strain BL21(DE3)pLysE cells using an In-Fusion HD Cloning Kit (Takara Bio) according to the supplier's instructions. The constructed plasmids were extracted and purified from cells using a High Pure Plasmid Isolation Kit (Roche Diagnostics, Basel, Switzerland). The nucleotide

155 sequences of inserted genes in the plasmid constructs were confirmed using an ABI 3730 XL DNA sequencer (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA).

Transformant cultures of *E. coli* strain BL21(DE3)pLysE were grown aerobically overnight with shaking at 37  $\degree$ C in LB medium and were then subcultured (1:100) into 400 mL LB medium supplemented with 100 μg/mL ampicillin. After 3-h incubation at 16 °C with shaking,

- 160 0.5 mM isopropyl β-D-1-thiogalactopyranoside was added to induce protein expression, and the cultures were further incubated overnight at  $16^{\circ}$ C and then harvested by centrifugation at 10,500 × *g*. Pelleted cells were resuspended in ∼20 mL TN buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl and 500 mM NaCl, pH 7.5) and were then disrupted by sonication. After the removal of cell debris by centrifugation at  $10,500 \times g$ , cell lysates were loaded onto a laboratory-packed column
- 165 containing 10 mL of cOmplete His-tag Purification Resin (Roche Diagnostics). The packed column was washed with 100 mL of 40 mM imidazole in TN buffer, and His-tagged proteins were then eluted with 20 mL of 500 mM imidazole in TN buffer. Collected fractions were desalted by repeated concentration and dilution at 4 °C using a 10,000 molecular weight cut-off centrifugal concentrator (Amicon Ultra-15 Centrifugal Filter Unit; Merck Millipore AG,
- 170 Zug, Switzerland). The purity of protein preparations was confirmed by SDS-15% PAGE (Figure S2). Protein concentrations were determined using a Protein Assay Kit (Bio-Rad, Hercules, CA, USA).

**Analysis of GGGE metabolism.** Strain MBES04 was grown aerobically overnight with 175 shaking at 30 °C in basal medium and was then subcultured (1:100) into 150 mL of basal

medium supplemented with 0.9 mM GGGE. The cultures were further incubated for 5 days at 30 °C with shaking, and culture supernatants were periodically collected by centrifugation at  $10,500 \times g$  for 5 min. A 0.1-mL aliquot of each supernatant sample was mixed with 0.9 mL methanol and then centrifuged at  $10,500 \times g$  for 5 min. The resulting supernatant was collected

- 180 and analyzed using an Aliance 2796 Liquid Chromatography (LC) system (Waters) equipped with an Xbridge C18 reversed-phase column  $(3.5\text{-}\mu\text{m})$  particle size,  $100 \times 4.6$  mm; Waters) operated at a flow rate of 1.2 mL/min using the mobile phase gradients  $A(2 \text{ mM sodium})$ acetate and  $0.05\%$  formic acid) and C (95% methanol/ $H_2O$ ) under the following conditions: 0–1 min, 90% A and 10% C, 1–8 min, a decreasing gradient of 90%–10% A with C as the
- 185 reminder, followed by 8–10 min 100% C. The eluate was monitored at 270 nm using a Waters 2998 PDA detector. The amounts of substrate and metabolites in the culture supernatant samples were calculated based on the area of the corresponding chromatographic peaks. Uninoculated medium incubated under the same conditions as the test cultures was used as a blank sample to assess the effect of the abiotic degradation of GGGE.

190

## **Preparation and structural characterization of metabolites produced by strain**

**MBES04.** The intermediate compound transiently produced by strain MBES04 was determined to be MPHPV based on molecular mass and retention time  $(t_R)$  on LC/MS analysis using synthetic MPHPV as a reference. One of the two major end metabolites was identified to

195 be guaiacol by comparison of the  $t_R$  value in reversed-phase column chromatography to that of the authentic compound.

To confirm the structure of the other major metabolite, which had a mass of 195.1 m/z (M-H<sup>+</sup>), the metabolite was purified by the following procedure. GGGE (288 mg, 3 mM final concentration) was added to a medium composed of 6 g Daigo artificial seawater (Wako), 0.9 g 200 Difco tryptone peptone, 0.9 g Bacto yeast extract, and 300 mL tap water. The prepared medium

was inoculated with strain MBES04 and was then incubated at 30 °C for 150 h with shaking at 120 rpm. The culture supernatant was collected by centrifugation, adjusted to approximately pH 3 with 10% aqueous HCl, and GHP was then extracted three times with 100 mL ethyl acetate. The ethyl acetate extract was concentrated under reduced pressure to obtain 0.5 g of

205 crude metabolite, which was then purified by silica gel (Wakogel C-200) column chromatography ( $110 \times 21$  mm) using ethyl acetate:toluene (1:1) as the eluent. The solvent was removed to yield a total of 140 mg crystals.

The purified metabolites recovered from the culture supernatant and chemically synthesized GHP were analyzed by LC/MS as described above, <sup>1</sup>H-NMR at 500 MHz in CDCl<sub>3</sub> and

- 210 <sup>13</sup> C-NMR at 126 MHz in CDCl<sub>3</sub>. Both compounds had identical  $t_R$  (2.3 min) values and had masses of 195.1 m/z. The GHP recovered and purified from the culture supernatant had the following characteristics: <sup>1</sup>H-NMR (500 MHz, CDCl3)  $\delta$  [ppm]: 7.56-7.54 (m, 2H, H2/H6), 6.96 (d, 1H, *J* = 8.5 Hz, H5), 6.12 (s, 1H, phenol-OH), 4.02 (t, 2H, *J* = 5.5 Hz, Hγ), 3.96 (s, 3H, 3-OMe), 3.19 (t, 2H, *J* = 5.3 Hz, Hβ), and 2.6-2.9 (s, 1H, γ-OH) (Figure S11a). 13C-NMR (126
- 215 MHz, CDCl3)  $\delta$  [ppm]: 199.1 (Ca); 150.8 (C4); 146.7 (C3); 129.7 (C1); 123.7 (C6); 113.9 (C5); 109.5 (C2); 58.3 (Cγ); 56.1 (3-OMe); and 39.8 (Cβ) (Figure S11b).

**SDRs and GSTs reactions of lignin model dimers.** The enzymatic conversions of four mixed stereoisomers of GGGE (1.0 mM) were performed with the recombinant enzymes

220 SDR3 (encoded by GAM05523, 10.0 µg/mL) or SDR5 (encoded by GAM05547, 5.0 µg/mL) with NAD sodium salt (2.0 mM) as a cofactor for 16 h at 15 or 25 °C, respectively. The enzymatic conversion of two mixed stereoisomers of MPHPV (1.0 mM) was conducted with one or two enzymes selected from GST3 (encoded by GAM05529, 5.0 µg/mL), GST4 (encoded by GAM05530, 5.0  $\mu$ g/mL), GST5 (encoded by GAM05531, 50.0  $\mu$ g/mL) and GST6 225 (encoded by GAM05532, 5.0 µg/mL) with glutathione (2.0 mM) as a cosubstrate for 16 h at 25 °C.

#### **Biochemical characterization and kinetics of SDRs and GSTs.** SDR3 and SDR5

were characterized using 10 mM GGGE as a substrate and 20 mM NAD sodium salt as a

- 230 cofactor. The formation of the reaction product, MPHPV, after 30-min incubation was determined by HPLC as described above. GST4 and GST5 were characterized using 5 mM MPHPV as a substrate and 10 mM GSH as a cofactor. The formation of the reaction product, guaiacol, was measured by HPLC. The determination of the pH optimum for enzymatic activity was performed using the following buffers (100 mM): 2-(N-morpholino)
- 235 ethanesulfonic acid (pH 5.5 to 7.0), 3-morpholinopropanesulfonic acid (pH 7.0 to 8.0), N-Tris(hydroxymethyl)methyl-3-aminopropanesulfonic acid (pH 8.0 to 9.0), N-cyclohexyl-2-aminoethanesulfonic acid (pH 9.0 to 10.0), and N-cyclohexyl-3-aminopropanesulfonic acid (pH 10.0 to 11.0). The optimal temperature was determined by measuring the formation of each reaction product after a 30-min incubation at 240 the optimal pH for each enzyme at temperature ranges of 5-45 °C for SDR3 and SDR5, and

15-45 °C for GST4 and GST5. All experiments were performed in triplicate.

Kinetic measurements were conducted for 30 min with the substrates (final concentrations) GGGE and VGGE (0.06 to 5.0 mM), MPHPV (0.06 to 2.5 mM), and GVG (0.06 to 1.5 mM). The highest concentration of each substrate was determined according to the maximum

245 solubility of each compound in the tested reaction mixture. The formation of MPHPV from GGGE by SDR3/SDR5, GVG from VGGE by SDR3/SDR5, and guaiacol from MPHPV and GVG by GST3/GST5 were measured by HPLC. The kinetic experiments were performed in triplicate. The apparent  $K_m$  and  $V_{max}$  values were calculated from a hyperbolic regression analysis using Hyper32 software (version 1.0.0.; http://homepage.ntlworld.com/john.easterby). 250 GST activities (10 µg GST3, GST4, GST5, and GST6) toward the commercially available substrates phenethyl isothiocyanate, 1-chloro-2,4-dinitrobenzene and 4-nitrophenyl butyrate were assessed according the method described by Mathieu *et al.* (36).

1,2-Dichloro-4-dinitrobenzene, ethacrynic acid and 4-nitrobenzyl chloride were also used as substrates (37).

255

- **Chiral chromatography.** The enzymatic reaction mixtures prepared above were loaded onto a Waters Oasis WAX Solid Extraction Cartridge Column and eluted with 60% acetonitrile. The recovered fractions were diluted 3 fold with  $H_2O$  to prepare 20% acetonitrile solutions, which were then injected into a CHIRALPAK IE-3 column  $(4.6 \times 250$  mm; Daicel Chemical
- 260 Industries) for separation of the stereoisomers α(*S*)β(*R*) GGGE, α(*R*)β(*S*) GGGE, α(*S*)β(*S*) GGGE, α(*R*)β(*R*) GGGE, β(*R*)MPHPV, and β(*S*) MPHPV. A mixture of acetonitrile and H2O was used as the mobile phase at a flow rate of 1.0 mL/min. The acetonitrile concentration of the mobile phase was adjusted as follows (the remainder was  $H_2O$ ): 0–10 min, 20% acetonitrile; 10–15 min, gradient from 20% to 30% acetonitrile; and 15–30 min, 30% 265 acetonitrile. The absorbance of the eluate was monitored at 270 nm using a Waters 2998 PDA detector. The  $t_R$  of  $\alpha(S)\beta(R)$  GGGE,  $\alpha(R)\beta(S)$  GGGE,  $\alpha(S)\beta(S)$  GGGE,  $\alpha(R)\beta(R)$  GGGE, β(*R*)MPHPV, and β(*S*) MPHPV are shown in Figure S9. Peak identification was based on optical rotation, as described by Hishiyama *et al.* (49).
- 270 **RNA isolation and purification.** Strain MBES04 was grown aerobically overnight with shaking at 30 °C in basal medium and was then subcultured  $(1:100)$  into 100 mL basal medium supplemented with 1 mM GGGE or MPHPV and further incubated at 30 °C for 6 h. Cells cultured in basal medium without GGGE and MPHPV were used as controls. Cells were collected by centrifugation at  $10,500 \times g$  for 5 min at 4 °C. RNA was isolated and purified

12

- 275 from the pelleted cells using an RNeasy kit (Qiagen, Valencia, CA, USA) following the manufacturer's manual. Total RNA was eluted in 100  $\mu$ L RNase-free H<sub>2</sub>O, and DNase I digestion of genomic DNA was then performed on a column using RNase-free DNase I (Qiagen) according to the manufacturer's protocol. The sample was then subjected to a second RNeasy purification step. RNA quality in the purified solutions was verified by quantification
- 280 of the A260/A280 and A260/A230 ratios using an e-Spect spectrophotometer (Malcom, Tokyo, Japan) and by electrophoresis on an Agilent Bioanalyzer to detect intact 16S and 23S rRNAs.

**Quantitative PCR (qPCR).** Four ug of total RNA was reverse transcribed using the Transcriptor First Strand cDNA Synthesis Kit (Roche Diagnostics) in a total volume of 40 µL.

285 The reaction was diluted 1:20 using water and 5 µL were used in the subsequent qPCR reaction performed with Light Cycler 480 SYBR Green Master Mix (Roche Diagnostics) in a Roche Light Cycler 480. The 16S rRNA gene was used as a reference. The primers used for qPCR are listed in Table S5. All qPCR experiments were performed independently in duplicate.

290

**RNA sequencing and data analysis.** RNA sequencing was conducted using a previously described method (50). Briefly, RNA samples were treated with DNase I (Promega, Madison, WI, USA) at a concentration of 1 U/μg of total RNA. rRNA was removed using a Ribo-Zero rRNA Removal Kit (Gram-Negative Bacteria) (Epicentre Biotechnologies, Madison, WI,

295 USA). Following purification, the mRNA was fragmented into small pieces (200-700 nt) using fragmentation buffer. The cleaved RNA fragments were used for first strand cDNA synthesis using reverse transcriptase and random primers. This synthesis reaction was followed by second strand cDNA synthesis using DNA polymerase I and RNase H. The generated cDNA fragments were purified using a QiaQuick PCR Extraction Kit (Qiagen), treated using an end

- 300 repair process, and then ligated to adapters. The obtained products were purified, and fragments with an approximate size of 200 bp were selected by agarose gel-electrophoresis. Sequencing libraries were constructed by amplifying the selected fragments by PCR. The quality of the sequencing libraries was assessed using an Agilent Bioanalyzer and ABI Step One Plus Real-Time PCR (Applied Biosystems). The constructed sequencing libraries were
- 305 sequenced using an Illumina Hiseq 2000 platform at the Beijing Genome Institute (BGI, Shenzhen, China).

RNAseq data analysis was performed by mapping the obtained reads to the strain MBES04 draft genome using the short-read aligner Bowtie (http://bowtie-bio.sourceforge.net) (51), with two mismatches being allowed per read alignment.

- 310 Differentially expressed genes from mapped RNA-Seq reads of strain MBES04 cultured in medium supplemented with and without lignin model dimer (1 mM GGGE or 1 mM MPHPV) were statistically identified using the method of the Bioconductor project (52), which included iDEGES for accurate normalization of tag count data (53) and edgeR for examining differential expression of replicated count data (54). Significance was calculated using
- 315 dispersion values estimated from the two samples, as no replicate was available, and was defined as a P-value of  $< 0.05$  in a negative binomial test following correction for false discovery rate (55). The pathways involved in the physiological response to lignin model dimers were inferred using the KEGG Automatic Annotation Server with manual curation (56).

# **II. Supplementary figures**

### **Figure S1. Detection of metabolites in the crude extract of milled wood**



The water-soluble fraction of a dioxan extract from milled wood, Quercus myrsinifolia (WDM), was used for cultivation of strain MBES04. After 48-h cultivation, the supernatant of the culture broth was analyzed by LC/MS. Control experiments conducted using WDM-supplemented medium without inoculation of strain MBES04 (control 1), and uninoculated medium without WDM (control 2) were performed in triplicate. All LC/MS loading data were analyzed using multivariate statistics. An OPLS-discriminant model was constructed and visualized in an S-plot (a) to detect differences between the data obtained from the WDM-supplemented culture media and those from the control experiments described above. Ten MS ions (b) with high loadings (>0.05) and correlations (>0.9) were selected as possible metabolites from WDM and used for quantification based on the peak area in the MS chromatograms (c). Metabolites were identified by comparing the retention times and MS spectra with those of authentic GHP and SHP.

Figure S2, SDS-PAGE of purified SDR (a) and GST (b) recombinant enzymes.



 M, SDR3, SDR5, M (kDa) M, GST3, GST4, GST5, GST6, M (kDa)

> M denotes the size marker.

Figure S3. Determination of the pH and temperature dependences of SDR and GST activities and kinetics with varying substrate concentrations.



pH and temperature dependences of SDR (SDR3 and SDR5) and GST (GST4 and GST5) activities were evaluated based on the conversion efficiency of GGGE and MPHPV, respectively. The determination of the pH optimum was performed using the following buffers (100 mM): 2-(N-morpholino) ethanesulfonic acid (pH 5.5 to 7.0), 3-morpholinopropanesulfonic acid (pH 7.0 to 8.0),

N-Tris(hydroxymethyl)methyl-3-aminopropanesulfonic acid (pH 8.0 to 9.0), N-cyclohexyl-2-aminoethanesulfonic acid (pH 9.0 to 10.0), and N-cyclohexyl-3-aminopropanesulfonic acid (pH 10.0 to 11.0). Values are presented as relative activity with the highest measured activity set to 100%. SDR kinetic experiments were conducted with varying concentrations of GGGE (0.06 to 5.0 mM) and VGGE (0.06 to 5.0 mM). GST kinetic experiments were conducted with varying concentrations of MPHPV (0.06 to 2.0 mM) and GVG (0.06 to 1.5 mM). All reactions were performed in triplicate.

Figure S4. Phylogenetic trees of aligned SDR and GST amino acid sequences.

a





18



 The aligned sequences depicted in (a) included the 15 most similar sequences to each SDR3 and SDR5 amino acid sequence found in the BLASTP database, in addition to the sequences of LigL and LigN. The GST sequences are the 15 most similar sequences to the GST3 (b), GST4 (c), GST5 (d), and GST6 (e) amino acid sequences in the BLASTP database. Enzymes with reported Cα-dehydrogenase, β-etherase, and β-thioetherase activities are indicated by the colored boxes.

Figure S5. Expression levels of GGGE-metabolizing genes in strain MBES04.



Gene expression levels were measured by qPCR in GGGE-supplemented (red bars) and control (blue bars) conditions. The levels are expressed as the ratio to the expression level of 16S RNA. RNA samples were extracted from two independent cultures for each defined medium condition and quantification of each sample qPCR was conducted in duplicate. Error bars indicate standard deviation.

Figure S6. MA plot of differentially expressed genes (DEG) in the transcriptome analysis of strain MBES04 in response to  $β$ - $O$ -4 lignin model dimers.

(a) The GGGE-supplemented condition (b) versus control condition

The MPHPV-supplemented condition versus the control condition



DEGs with significance (p<0.05; pink dots) and non-DEGs (black dots) in response to GGGE (a) and MPHPV (b) are shown in the MA plots. The a- and m-values were calculated as follows: avalue=1/2log<sub>2</sub>(G1G2)=log<sub>2</sub>(G1)+log<sub>2</sub>(G2), m-value=log<sub>2</sub>(G2/G1)=log<sub>2</sub>(G2)−log<sub>2</sub>(G1), G1: read counts in the control condition, G2: read counts in response to GGGE or MPHPV. 21



Figure S8.  $^{13}$ C-NMR spectrum of synthetic VGGE in CDCl<sub>3</sub>. VGGE [synthetic]  $^{13}$ C-NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)



Figure S9. Chiral HPLC chromatograms of synthetic GGGE and MPHPV.



Four stereoisomers of GGGE and two stereoisomers of MPHPV were separated by UV absorbance at 270 nm (top) and optical rotation (bottom). The elution time is indicated below the peak identifications.



Figure S10, <sup>1</sup>H-NMR (a) and <sup>13</sup>C-NMR (b) spectra of synthetic GHP in CDCl<sub>3</sub>.



Figure S11. <sup>1</sup>H-NMR (a) and <sup>13</sup>C-NMR (b) spectra of biologically produced GHP in CDCI<sub>3</sub>. (a) GHP [biologically produced]  $^1$ H-NMR (500 MHz, CDCI<sub>3</sub>)



Figure S11. 1H-NMR (a) and 13C-NMR (b) spectra of biologically produced GHP in CDCl<sub>3</sub>. (b) GHP [biologically produced]  $^{13}$ C-NMR (126 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>)



# **III. Supplementary tables**

Gene ID	BLASTP search nearest hit	Accession	E-value	Identity (% )	Conserved domain
GAM03180	catalase-peroxidase	WP 007712754	$0.0E + 00$	80	catalase_peroxidase_2
	[ <i>Sphingobium sp. AP49</i> ]				
GAM05894	peroxidase	WP 046905285	$0.0E + 0.0$	78	catalase peroxidase 2
	[Altererythrobacter atlanticus]				
GAM05893	catalase-peroxidase	WP 015870368	5.0E-133	82	catalase peroxidase 1
	[Edwardsiella ictaluri]				
GAM04190	iron-dependent peroxidase	EZP74749	1.0E-162	58	predicted iron-dependent
	[Novosphingobium resinovorum]				peroxidase, COG2837
GAM04037	polyphenol oxidase	WP 044335145	3.0E-118	72	multicopper polyphenol
	[Sphingomonas sp. WHSC-8]				oxidase (laccase), yfiH
GAM03576	oxidase	WP 010240406	$0.0E + 00$	98	multicopper oxidase,
	[Citromicrobium bathyomarinum]				PRK10965

**Table S1.** The putative genes for catalase-peroxidase and multicopper oxidase of strain MBES04





**Table S3.** Biochemical characterization and kinetics of SDRs (a) and GSTs (b) from strain MBES04 and comparison of those of closely related enzymes.

a	Parameter	Substrate	Enzyme				
			SDR3	SDR <sub>5</sub>	$LigD*$		
	optimal pH	GGGE	9	$9-10$	9		
	optimal Temperature		15	30	60		
	specific activity (mU/mg)		$3.4E + 02$	$4.3E + 04$	$1.2E + 04$		
	$v_{\text{max}}$ (mU)		$4.2E + 02$	$4.6E + 04$	$7.9E + 03$		
	$K_{\rm M}$ (mM)		9.7E-01	$2.0E-01$	$1.1E + 00$		
	$k_{\text{cat}}\left(\text{min}^{-1}\right)$		$1.6E + 01$	$1.7E + 03$	$2.6E+02$		
	$k_{cat}/K_{\rm M}$ (min <sup>-1</sup> mM <sup>-1</sup> )		$1.6E + 01$	$8.6E + 03$	$2.4E+02$		
	specific activity $(mU/mg)$	VGGE	$7.4E + 01$	$2.9E + 04$	N.D.		
	$V$ max (mU)		$1.0E + 02$	$3.8E + 04$	N.D.		
	$K_{\rm M}$ (mM)		$1.5E + 00$	$1.1E + 00$	N.D.		
	$k_{\text{cat}}\left(\text{min}^{-1}\right)$		$3.9E + 00$	$1.4E + 03$	N.D.		
	$k_{cat}/K_{\rm M}$ (min <sup>-1</sup> mM <sup>-1</sup> )		$2.5E + 00$	$1.3E + 03$	N.D.		



\* Data retrieved from Reiter *et al* . (*Green Chem* , 2013, 15, 1373-1381). LigD; GenBank; BAA02030.1 from *Sphingobium* sp. SYK-6

\*\* Data retrieved from Picart *et al* . (*ChemSusChem* , 2014, 7, 3164-3171).

LigF; GenBank;BAK6554 from *Sphingobium* sp. SYK-6, LigF-NS; GenBank; CCA92087 from *Novophingobium* sp. PP1Y, LigF-NS; GenBank; ABD26530, from *N. aromaticivorans* DSM 12444. LigE; GenBank; BAK65541 from *Sphingobium* sp. SYK-6, LigE-NS; GenBank; CCA92088 from *Novophingobium* sp. PP1Y, LigE-NS; GenBank; ABD26841 from *N. aromaticivorans* DSM 12444. LigP; GenBank; BAK67935 from *Sphingobium* sp. SYK-6

N.D. ; not determined.

#### **Table S4.** Distribution of possible GGGE-metabolizing genes in the Sphingomonadaceae family



Continue to the next page

#### Continued from the previous page



The six enzymes identified in strain MBES04 and experimentally validated for their conversion activity of GGGE were used as queries to retrieve protein sequences with sequences imilarity in 84 species within the Sphingomon

The full titles of the referenece literatures cited in this table are avirable in supplementary at the Scientific Reports's web site.

### **Table S5.** List of possible GGGE-metabolizing genes and their distribution in the genomes of selected isolates



























-; Not detected Similarity between GGGE-converting enzymes from strain MBES04 and homologous proteins of selected species and their chromosomal locations or available contigs are shown.

#### **Table S6.** Differentially expressed genes in response to GGGE and MPHPV in whole-genome transcriptional profiling

**a** Upregurated genes in response to GGGE

<b>Gene ID</b>	<b>Putative function</b>	Fold change	$\mathbf{a}.\mathbf{value}^{(1)}$	$\mathbf{m}.\mathbf{value}^{(2)}$	p.value	q.value	KO $entry^{(3)}$	<b>KEGG</b> pathway or Definition
GAM03020	hypothetical protein	2.0	$9.3E + 00$	$1.0E + 00$	9.4E-07	3.0E-04		(4)
GAM03021	outer membrane protein	2.8	$1.3E + 01$	$1.5E + 00$	5.5E-15	$1.3E-11$	K18139	β-lactam resistance
GAM03022	hydrophobe/amphiphile efflux-1 (HAE1) family transporter	2.7	$1.4E + 01$	$1.4E + 00$	9.9E-14	$1.5E-10$	K03296	hydrophobic/amphiphilic exporter-1 (mainly G- bacteria), HAE1 family
GAM03023	membrane fusion protein	2.6	$1.2E + 01$	$1.4E + 00$	$3.3E-13$	$3.1E-10$	K03585	β-lactam resistance
GAM03024	TetR family transcriptional regulator	1.8	$1.0E + 01$	8.8E-01	9.0E-06	2.2E-03		
GAM03455	hypothetical protein	6.0	$7.4E + 00$	$2.6E + 00$	7.6E-24	$3.6E - 20$		
GAM03456	$p$ -cresol methylhydroxylase subunit	2.9	$9.0E + 00$	$1.5E + 00$	$4.6E-13$	$3.6E-10$	K05797	toluene degradation
GAM03457	$p$ -cresol methylhydroxylase subunit	2.6	$6.4E + 00$	$1.4E + 00$	3.8E-06	$1.1E-03$		toluene degradation
GAM03580	cation efflux protein	3.6	$4.8E + 00$	$1.9E + 00$	4.3E-05	7.4E-03		
GAM03631	acyl-CoA dehydrogenase	1.8	$1.1E + 01$	8.3E-01	1.9E-05	$4.0E - 03$		
GAM03632	3-hydroxyacyl-CoA dehydrogenase	1.9	$1.2E + 01$	9.3E-01	1.3E-06	3.8E-04	K07516	fatty acid degradation/carbon fixation pathways in prokaryotes/carbon metabolism/fatty acid metabolism
GAM03633	acetyl-CoA acyltransferase	1.7	$1.1E + 01$	8.1E-01	$3.1E-0.5$	5.9E-03	K00632	ratty aciu uegrauation/vanne, ieucnie anu isoieucnie degradation/geraniol degradation (metabolism of terpenoids and polyketides)/benzoate degradation/a-linolenic acid metabolism/ethylbenzene degradation/fatty acid
GAM03896	calcium-binding protein	2.3	$8.6E + 00$	$1.2E + 00$	$3.0E-08$	$1.2E - 0.5$		المستكلات للمتعديد
GAM04082	hypothetical conserved protein	2.5	$8.4E + 00$	$1.3E + 00$	3.4E-09	1.6E-06		
GAM04083	hypothetical protein	2.6	$8.9E + 00$	$1.4E + 00$	4.4E-11	2.6E-08		
								phenylalanine metabolism/benzoate
GAM04124	2-keto-4-pentenoate hydratase	1.7	$9.9E + 00$	7.3E-01	2.5E-04	3.7E-02	K02554	degradation/dioxin degradation/xylene
GAM04237	Malate: quinone oxidoreductase	2.0	$8.0E + 00$	$1.0E + 00$	$1.3E-0.5$	$2.8E-03$	K00116	degradation/degradation of aromatic compounds citrate cycle/pyruvate metabolism/carbon
								metabolism
GAM04562	PadR family transcriptional regulator	1.7	$1.2E + 01$	7.8E-01	3.6E-05	6.5E-03	K10947	PadR family transcriptional regulator, regulatory protein PadR
GAM04568	hypothetical conserved protein	1.8	$9.0E + 00$	8.5E-01	5.1E-05	8.6E-03		
GAM04702	hypothetical protein	1.6	$9.6E + 00$	7.2E-01	3.5E-04	5.0E-02		
GAM04949	two component LuxR family transcriptional regulator	1.9	$7.2E + 00$	9.5E-01	2.1E-04	3.3E-02		
GAM05027	FAD dependent oxidoreductase	2.1	$8.4E + 00$	$1.1E + 00$	7.7E-07	$2.6E-04$	K00111	glycerophospholipid metabolism
GAM05028	major facilitator superfamily glycerol uptake transporter	2.2	$8.2E + 00$	$1.1E + 00$	5.8E-07	$2.1E-04$	K02440	glycerol uptake facilitator protein
GAM05030	glycerol kinase	1.8	$8.9E + 00$	8.8E-01	3.1E-05	5.9E-03	K00864	glycerolipid metabolism/PPAR signaling pathway/plant-pathogen interaction
GAM05137	CopG family transcriptional regulator	1.7	$9.3E + 00$	$7.4E-01$	2.7E-04	$4.0E - 02$	K07722	CopG family transcriptional regulator, nickel- responsive regulator
GAM06305	hypothetical conserved protein	2.6	$8.8E + 00$	$1.4E + 00$	1.9E-10	$1.0E-07$		
GAM06306	neutral amino acid transporter B(0)-like	2.7	$9.7E + 00$	$1.4E + 00$	1.2E-12	$8.4E-10$	K11103	two-component system
GAM06750	REDY-like protein HapK	1.9	$7.5E + 00$	$9.3E - 01$	1.4E-04	$2.3E-02$		

**b** Upregurated genes in response to MPHPV





**c** Downregurated genes in response to GGGE



**d** Downregurated genes in response to MPHPV



 $(1)(2)$  The a- and m-values were calculated as follows:

a-value =  $1/2\log_2(G1G2) = \log_2(G1) + \log_2(G2)$ 

m-value =  $log_2(G2/G1) = log_2(G2) - log_2(G1)$ 

G1: gene expression level in the control condition

G2: gene expression level in response to GGGE or MPHPV

Genes differentially expressed in response specifically to GGGE or MPHPV are highlighted in gray.

<sup>(3)</sup> KO entries are the defined ortholog groups categorized under the hierarchy of KEGG pathways and BRITE ontologies in Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes Databases (KEGG) (http://www.genome.jp/kegg/).

<sup>(4)</sup> Not defined due to the low nucleotide sequence similarity to the KO entries





**Table S7.** Primers used for qRT-PCR

Target	Primer name	Sequence	Amplicon size (bp)		
GAM05523	g0069_fw	<b>GCGCATCTCAAGAACGTG</b>	132		
	g0069_rv	GATGTCTTCCAGCGGCTT			
GAM05529	g0075_fw	<b>GACGCGAACTACACGTTG</b>	114		
	g0075_rv	<b>GACCTCATGGTCGATCAGTG</b>			
GAM05530	g0075_fw	AGGTTCTGGACGAGGAAATG			
	g0075_rv	GATGGCGAAGTTGCAGATG	125		
GAM05531	g0077_fw	CCGAATACCTCGATGAGACT	156		
	$g0077$ _rv	<b>GCAACGACAGATCATGGTAG</b>			
GAM05532	g0078_fw	GCTATC GCATGATCCTGAAC			
	g0078_rv	CGAAACGGTCGAACAGGTA	135		
GAM05547	g0093_fw	<b>GTTTCTTCCACCTCTACCAGAC</b>	89		
	g0093_rv	<b>GTGGGTGAGGATGTAGAGTTC</b>			
16SrDNA	16Sr fw	TGGGCACTCTAAGGAAACTG	109		
	$16Sr$ rv	<b>GTCACCGCCATTGTAGCA</b>			

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