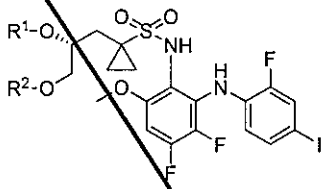
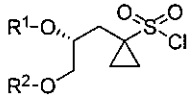
**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A process for preparing a compound of formula (I-a):



formula (I-a)

comprising, contacting 5,6-difluoro-$N^1$-(2-fluoro-4-iodophenyl)-3-methoxybenzene-1,2-diamine with a compound of formula (II-a):



formula (II-a),

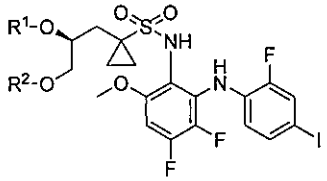
wherein

$R^1$ is H or an alcohol protecting group;

$R^2$ is H or an alcohol protecting group; or

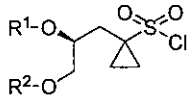
$R^1$ and $R^2$ together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form a cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

2. A process for preparing a compound of formula (I-b):



formula (I-b)

comprising, contacting 5,6-difluoro-$N^1$-(2-fluoro-4-iodophenyl)-3-methoxybenzene-1,2-diamine with a compound of formula (II-b):



formula (II-b),

wherein

$R^1$ is H or an alcohol protecting group;

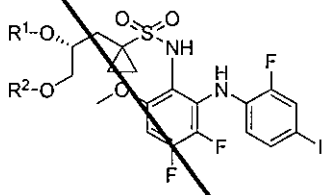
$R^2$ is H or an alcohol protecting group; or

$R^1$ and $R^2$ together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form a cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

3. A process for preparing (R)-N-(3,4-difluoro-2-(2-fluoro-4-iodophenylamino)-6-methoxyphenyl)-1-(2,3-dihydroxypropyl)cyclopropane-1-sulfonamide, comprising,

contacting a compound of formula (I-a) with an acid, a base or a nucleophile; or

exposing the compound of formula (I-a) to UV light:



formula (I-a)

wherein

$R^1$ is H or an alcohol protecting group;

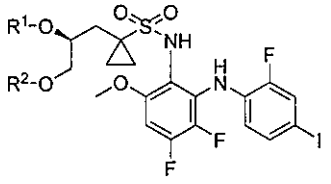
$R^2$ is H or an alcohol protecting group; or

$R^1$ and $R^2$ together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form a cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group, wherein $R^1$ and $R^2$ cannot both be H.

4. A process for preparing (S)-N-(3,4-difluoro-2-(2-fluoro-4-iodophenylamino)-6-methoxyphenyl)-1-(2,3-dihydroxypropyl)cyclopropane-1-sulfonamide, comprising,

contacting a compound of formula (I-b) with an acid, a base or a nucleophile; or

exposing the compound of formula (I-b) to UV light:



formula (I-b)

wherein

$R^1$ is H or an alcohol protecting group;

$R^2$ is H or an alcohol protecting group; or

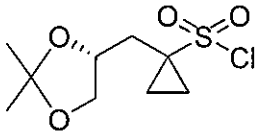
$R^1$ and $R^2$ together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form a cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group, wherein $R^1$ and $R^2$ cannot both be H.

5. A process of claim 1, wherein $R^1$ and $R^2$ together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form a cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

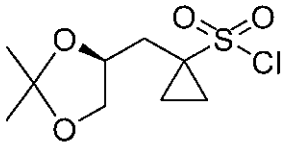
6. The process of claim 5, wherein the cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group is a 5-membered cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

7. The process of claim 6, wherein the cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group is 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl.

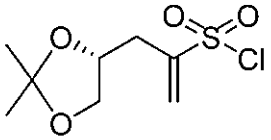
8. The compound (R)-1-((2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl)methyl)cyclopropane-1-sulfonyl chloride:



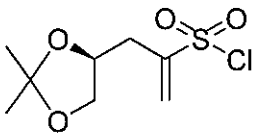
9. The compound (S)-1-((2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl)methyl)cyclopropane-1-sulfonyl chloride:



10. The compound (R)-3-(2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl)prop-1-ene-2-sulfonyl chloride:



11. The compound (S)-3-(2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl)prop-1-ene-2-sulfonyl chloride:



12. A process of claim 2, wherein $R^1$ and $R^2$ together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form a cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

13. A process of claim 3, wherein $R^1$ and $R^2$ together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form a cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

14. A process of claim 4, wherein $R^1$ and $R^2$ together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached form a cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

15. The process of claim 12, wherein the cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group is a 5-membered cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

16. The process of claim 13, wherein the cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group is a 5-membered cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

17. The process of claim 14, wherein the cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group is a 5-membered cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

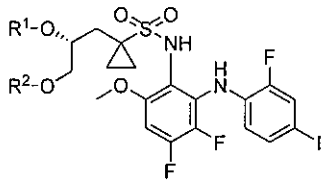
18. The process of claim 12, wherein the cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group is 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl.

19. The process of claim 13, wherein the cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group is 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl.

20. The process of claim 14, wherein the cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group is 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl.

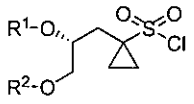
## CLAIMS

1. A process for preparing a compound of formula (I-a):



formula (I-a)

comprising, contacting 5,6-difluoro-$N^1$-(2-fluoro-4-iodophenyl)-3-methoxybenzene-1,2-diamine with a compound of formula (II-a):



formula (II-a),

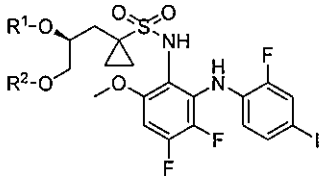
wherein

$R^1$ is H or an alcohol protecting group;

$R^2$ is H or an alcohol protecting group; or

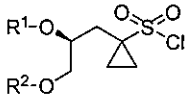
$R^1$ and $R^2$ together with the oxygen atoms to which they are attached form a cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

2. A process for preparing a compound of formula (I-b):



formula (I-b)

comprising, contacting 5,6-difluoro-$N^1$-(2-fluoro-4-iodophenyl)-3-methoxybenzene-1,2-diamine with a compound of formula (II-b):



formula (II-b),

wherein

$R^1$ is H or an alcohol protecting group;

$R^2$ is H or an alcohol protecting group; or

$R^1$ and $R^2$ together with the oxygen atoms to which they are attached form a cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

3. The process of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group is a 5-membered cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group.

4. The process of claim 3, wherein the cyclic 1,2-diol protecting group is 2,2-dimethyl-1,3-dioxolan-4-yl.