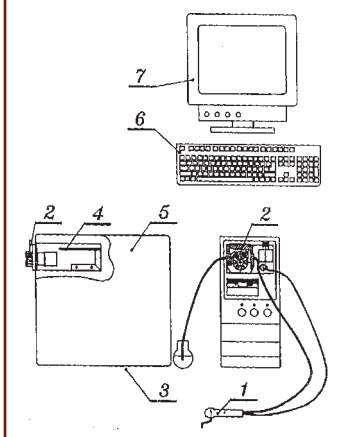


WIPO AWARDS FOR CUBAN INNOVATORS

Two teams of Cuban scientists received WIPO Gold Medals in April for biotechnological inventions, which were singled out for their high social and economic impact. Cuba makes systematic use of the WIPO Award schemes as a means of giving public recognition to its creators and promoting the importance of innovation.

A research team from the National Scientific Research Center (CNIC) was awarded a WIPO medal for their invention of the *Diramic* system, a method, kit and equipment used for the rapid microbiological diagnosis of urinary tract infections. By measuring changes in turbidity in urine samples caused by microbial growth, *Diramic* determines within four hours the pattern of susceptibility to antibiotics, so offering a fast and economical diagnostic method. The equipment is coupled to a computer which generates the diagnostic reports. The system was introduced into the Cuban National Health System five years ago and has been used in the care of some 200,000 patients. Laboratories in Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela have also started to use the system, under license from the CNIC.

(54) Title: EQUIPMENT, KIT AND METHOD FOR MICROBIOLOGICAL DIAGNOSIS



An international patent application for *Diramic* (PCT WO 98/47999) has been granted in the United States, China, Mexico, Chile, Argentina and the Philippines.

Life saver for premature babies

The second award went to a research team from the National Agricultural Health Center (CENSA) for *Surfacen*, a natural surfactant product derived from animal tissue, developed under the Ministry of Public Health's drug program for early childhood care. *Surfacen* is used to treat infant respiratory distress syndrome, a frequent cause of death in premature babies. Surfactants, which are produced naturally in the lungs, are essential to the lungs' ability to absorb oxygen and to maintain the airflow through the respiratory system. Premature babies born before 32 weeks do not produce enough natural surfactant to inflate their lungs, and they die without treatment. Since coming into clinical use in Cuba in 1995, *Surfacen* has made a major contribution in improving infant mortality rate, one of the most representative health indicators of Cuban society.

Surfacen is patented in Cuba, Spain, Chile, Mexico and Argentina, and is in clinical use in Colombia, Guatemala, Chile and Mexico.

Innovative enterprise

The Cuban government also uses the WIPO award scheme to publicize the strategic use of intellectual property (IP) by its business entrepreneurs. The *Corporación Cuba Ron S.A.* (Cuban Rum Corporation) recently received a WIPO Trophy for Innovative Enterprises for its effective use of the IP system in its corporate strategy as a means of positioning its products competitively on the international market.



Madrid registration number 690525

Cuba Ron produces rums, liquors, and other alcoholic drinks in large traditional rum factories around the country. The Corporation owns several prestigious trademarks, which are recognized internationally with a reputation for quality. After creating the *Havana Club* trademark, Cuba Ron joined forces with the French group Pernod Ricard in 1993 with the aim of making Cuban rum part of the worldwide spirits market. The *Havana Club* trademark now transcends national borders, and has become a worldwide symbol for Cuban rum.

The firm has continued to build on the reputation of *Havana Club*, creating other marks for products that meet international standards of quality and the market requirements for spirits. The marks *Cubay* and *Santiago de Cuba* are commercialized in the most important spirits markets in the European Union, Japan, Chile, Ecuador, New Zealand and elsewhere.