

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Novartis AG v. Viljam Kari

Case No. DME2025-0036

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Novartis AG, Switzerland, represented by Abion GmbH, Switzerland.

The Respondent is Viljam Kari, United States of America.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <novartispac.me> is registered with NameCheap, Inc. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on December 15, 2025. On December 16, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On December 17, 2025, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which differed from the named Respondent (Redacted, Privacy service provided by Withheld for Privacy ehf) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on December 18, 2025, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on December 22, 2025.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy” or “UDRP”), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Supplemental Rules”).

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on December 22, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was January 11, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on January 12, 2026.

The Center appointed Meera Chature Sankhari as the sole panelist in this matter on January 19, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant, Novartis AG having its headquarters in Switzerland, was created in 1996 through a merger of two other companies Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz and is the holding company of the Novartis Group. The Novartis Group is one of the biggest global pharmaceutical and healthcare groups. It provides solutions to address the evolving needs of patients worldwide by developing and delivering innovative medical treatments and drugs. In 2024, the Complainant achieved net sales of USD 50.3 billion, and total net income amounted to USD 11.9 billion. Additionally, the Complainant employs approximately 76,000 full time equivalent employees as of December 31, 2024. The Complainant's products are manufactured and sold in many countries worldwide.

The Complainant owns numerous domain names composed of either its trademark NOVARTIS stand alone, including <novartis.com> (created on April 2, 1996), <novartis.net> (created on April 25, 1998), or in combination with other terms, such as <novartispharma.com> (created on October 27, 1999).

The Complainant also enjoys a strong presence online via its official social media platforms screenprints of which the Complainant has furnished in these proceedings.

The Complainant is the owner of the registered trademark NOVARTIS in United States of America having Registration No. 2336960, registered on April 4, 2000, in multiple classes including 01, 05, 09, 10, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 42. Likewise, the Complainant owns registration for NOVARTIS in European Union bearing Registration No. 013393641, registered on March 17, 2015, in classes 09 and 10. The Complainant also has International Registration for the mark NOVARTIS bearing No. 663765 in multiple classes dated July 1, 1996 (hereinafter collectively referred to as "the NOVARTIS trademark").

The disputed domain name <novartispac.me> was created on September 24, 2025, and does not resolve to an active website.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

Notably, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name <novartispac.me> incorporates the Complainant's well-known trademark NOVARTIS in its entirety. The Complainant further contends that the term "PAC" often used as an acronym of the expression "political action committee" would not prevent a finding of confusing similarity to the trademark. The presence of the country code Top-Level Domain ".me" is a standard registration requirement and may be disregarded for assessing the confusing similarity.

It was submitted by the Complainant that no right to use the NOVARTIS trademark in any form, including in the disputed domain name, was granted to the Respondent by it. It was further submitted that there is no evidence that the Respondent is known by the dispute domain name. The Complainant has submitted the search results of the searches it conducted for the terms "novartis" and "pac" in combination with the Respondent's name "Viljam Kari" on google and the term "novartispac.me" in an online trademark databases and for marks owned by the Respondent, where none revealed the Respondent using a mark corresponding with the disputed domain name. The Complainant asserts that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name and argues that by incorporating the Complainant's NOVARTIS trademark in its entirety, the Respondent is trying to create an association in the minds of Internet users with the Complainant. Additionally, the use of the term "pac" refers to the Novartis PAC, which is a voluntary, bi-partisan organization, formed to support candidates for public office who advocate for issues important to the Complainant's mission, demonstrate political leadership or represent a state or district where the company has a facility or a large concentration of employees. The Complainant contends that the Internet users may believe that the disputed domain name is directly connected or authorized by the Complainant and that it will resolve to the Complainant's official website, which is not the case.

The Complainant further contends that the Respondent has registered and used the disputed domain name in bad faith due to the following reasons: (a) the disputed domain name is inactive and is being passively held by the Respondent, thus, there is no use whatsoever in a bona fide manner (b) the Respondent has incorporated the Complainant's trademark in its entirety, making the Internet users believe that it is directly connected to or authorized by or associated with the Complainant, consequently creating a likelihood of confusion (c) the Complainant and its NOVARTIS trademark is well-known in many countries and has a strong online presence and therefore it is highly improbable that the Respondent was unaware of the Complainant and its well-known trademark at the time of registration of the disputed domain name (d) the Respondent failed to respond to the cease-and-desist letter dated October 6, 2025, and subsequent follow-ups dated October 17 and 21, 2025, sent by the Complainant and lastly that (e) the Respondent tried to conceal its identity through a privacy shield.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant's contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

The entirety of the mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms here, "pac" may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8.

The Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task of "proving a negative", requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Complainant has submitted evidence showing search results for the terms "novartis" and "pac" in connection with the name of the Respondent on google and the term "novartispac.me" in an online trademark databases as well as a

search for marks owned by the Respondent and no results were revealed showing any connection between the Respondent and the disputed domain name. Moreover, the Complainant had issued a cease-and-desist notice to the Respondent, which the Respondent allegedly did not reply to. The Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant's prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

The Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Panel notes that, for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular, but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

In the present case, Panel finds that the Respondent has registered and used the disputed domain name with the intention of creating an association, affiliation, or connection with the Complainant and its NOVARTIS trademark in the minds of Internet users, thereby giving rise to a likelihood of confusion.

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive circumstances that may indicate that a domain name was registered and used in bad faith, but other circumstances may be relevant in assessing whether a respondent's registration and use of a domain name is in bad faith. The Panel finds it impossible to conceive that the Respondent was unaware of the Complainant or its well-known mark NOVARTIS at the time of registering the disputed domain name. It is also noteworthy that the Respondent has concealed its identity through the use of a privacy shield, which further evidences the Respondent's bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.2.1.

Panels have found that the non-use of a domain name would not prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.3. Having reviewed the available record, the Panel notes the distinctiveness or reputation of the Complainant's trademark, and the composition of the disputed domain name, and finds that in the circumstances of this case the passive holding of the disputed domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the Policy.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name <novartispac.me> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Meera Chature Sankhari/

Meera Chature Sankhari

Sole Panelist

Date: February 2, 2026