

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Equinor ASA v. Host Master, Njalla Okta LLC

Case No. D2025-2996

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Equinor ASA, Norway, represented by Valea AB trading as Rouse AB, Sweden.

The Respondent is Host Master, Njalla Okta LLC, Saint Kitts and Nevis.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <equinor-supplychain.com> is registered with Tucows Domains Inc. (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on July 26, 2025. On July 28, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On August 15, 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 FOR PRIVACY) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on August 19, 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 amendment to the Complaint on August 19, 2025.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amendment to the 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 August 21, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was September 10, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on September 15, 2025.

The Center appointed Marcello Do Nascimento as the sole panelist in this matter on September 22, 2025. 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

Firstly, Equinor ASA, referred to as “the Complainant,” is one of the leading international energy companies and is headquartered in Norway. Originally founded in 1972 as Statoil, the Norwegian State Oil Company, the Complainant has evolved alongside the development of Norway’s oil and gas industry. In 2018, the company underwent a strategic rebranding to reflect its transition toward renewable energy sources, adopting the name “Equinor”. Today, the Complainant operates in over 30 countries, engaging in the exploration, production, and development of oil, gas, wind, and solar energy. The Complainant’s business model emphasizes sustainability, innovation, and responsible energy production, positioning it as a major player in the global energy sector.

Furthermore, the Complainant holds a robust intellectual property portfolio, including numerous trademark registrations for the EQUINOR mark across multiple jurisdictions. These registrations protect the Complainant’s brand identity and reputation, which are closely associated with quality, reliability, and environmental responsibility. The Complainant also maintains over 100 domain name registrations incorporating its trademark, reinforcing its digital presence and safeguarding against misuse. The EQUINOR mark is widely recognized and considered distinctive within the energy industry, and the Complainant actively enforces its rights to prevent unauthorized use and potential consumer confusion.

The Complainant holds several registrations for the trademark EQUINOR with various trademark offices, as verified by the Panel. The Complainant has attached those listed to its Complaint:

- Norwegian trademark EQUINOR No. 298811, registered on June 12, 2018, duly valid until March 14, 2028, and designating goods and services in classes 4, 40 and 42, including petroleum products, energy production, and engineering services related to oil, gas, and renewable energy.
- Norwegian trademark EQUINOR No. 298813, registered on June 12, 2018, also valid until March 14, 2028, and designating similar goods and services in classes 4, 40 and 42.
- European Union trademark No. 017900772, registered on January 18, 2019, and valid until May 15, 2028, covering a broad range of goods and services across multiple classes.
- United States of America trademark No. 6,436,681, registered on August 3, 2021, covering goods and services in 25 international classes, including chemicals, fuels, software, engineering, energy production, and consulting services.

These registrations confirm the Complainant’s longstanding and internationally recognized rights in the EQUINOR mark.

The Complainant holds numerous domain name registrations incorporating the trademark EQUINOR, as verified by the Panel. Complainant has attached those listed, among several others:

- Domain names such as <equinor.com>, <equinor.org>, <equinor.biz>, <equinor.email>, <equinorenergy.com>, <equinorbatteries.com>, <equinoroffshore.com>, and <equinorsolar.com>, covering generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs).
- Country-code Top-Level Domains including <equinor.com.br>, <equinor.co.uk>, <equinor.de>, <equinor.fr>, and <equinor.jp>, among others.

This extensive portfolio demonstrates the Complainant’s active and strategic efforts to protect its brand identity across digital platforms and jurisdictions, reinforcing the distinctiveness and global recognition of the EQUINOR mark.

The disputed domain name was registered on June 8, 2025, and according to the evidence submitted, it was used in a fraudulent email scheme.

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, <equinor-supplychain.com>, is confusingly similar to its registered and well-known trademark, EQUINOR. The disputed domain name incorporates the EQUINOR mark in its entirety, followed by the generic terms “supply” and “chain.” According to the Complainant, these additional terms do not prevent a finding of confusing similarity under the first element of the Policy. On the contrary, they may enhance the likelihood of confusion, as they are directly related to the Complainant’s business activities in the energy sector, including logistics and procurement.

The Complainant emphasizes that a holistic approach should be adopted when assessing similarity, and that a side-by-side comparison of the disputed domain name and the textual components of the trademark clearly reveals the recognizability of the EQUINOR mark within the domain name. In support of this, the Complainant cites Section 1.7 of the WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition, (“[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)”), which states that “where a domain name incorporates the entirety of a trademark, the domain name will normally be considered confusingly similar.”

Furthermore, the Complainant refers to Section 1.8 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), noting that the inclusion of generic terms such as “supply” and “chain” does not negate the confusing similarity. The Complainant also points out that the “.com” gTLD is a standard registration requirement and should be disregarded in the similarity analysis, as per Section 1.11.1 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#).

Given the widespread reputation and high degree of recognition of the EQUINOR mark, particularly within the global energy industry, and the absence of any distinguishing elements in the disputed domain name, the Complainant contends that the domain name is confusingly similar—if not effectively identical—to its trademark. The Complainant further argues that an average Internet user encountering the disputed domain name or receiving communications from it would likely assume an affiliation with or endorsement by the Complainant.

The Complainant argues that the Respondent has no rights to or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name.

Lastly, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name has been used to send fraudulent emails impersonating the Complainant and asking for payment and delivery of goods.

Based on the foregoing, the Complainant submits that the first condition under the Policy is satisfied.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

The disputed domain name <equinor-supplychain.com> is confusingly similar to the Complainant’s registered trademark EQUINOR. It is well-established that when a domain name incorporates the entirety of a trademark, making it recognizable within the disputed domain name—as is the case here—the addition of generic or descriptive terms does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity. This principle is supported by

Section 1.8 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), which affirms that the inclusion of additional terms does not negate the confusing similarity.

The Complainant has provided evidence supporting its rights to the EQUINOR trademark, including multiple national and international registrations. The disputed domain name incorporates this mark in its entirety, without alteration. Previous UDRP panels have consistently held that minor additions or generic terms do not eliminate confusing similarity when the trademark remains recognizable within the disputed domain name. As stated in Section 1.7 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), a domain name is considered confusingly similar to a trademark if it incorporates the entirety of the mark or if a dominant feature of the mark is recognizable in the disputed domain name.

Therefore, based on the reasons outlined above, the Panel determines that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's registered trademark EQUINOR, and that the first element under the Policy has been satisfied.

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 rests with the Complainant, panels have recognized that demonstrating a lack of rights or legitimate interests may involve the difficult task of "proving a negative," often requiring information that lies primarily within the control of the Respondent. Accordingly, where a complainant establishes a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production shifts to the respondent to present evidence demonstrating such rights or legitimate interests (while the burden of proof remains with the complainant). This principle is reflected in Section 2.1 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#).

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 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.

In this case, the Respondent has opted not to submit any response to the Complaint, nor has it provided any evidence to demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Complainant has stated that the Respondent is neither affiliated with nor authorized by the Complainant to use the EQUINOR trademark in any capacity. The Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain name, nor is it using the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services or for any legitimate noncommercial purpose.

Moreover, the disputed domain name incorporates the Complainant's well-known trademark EQUINOR in its entirety, along with generic terms that suggest a commercial or operational context ("supply" and "chain"), which may imply an official or authorized channel.

The Panel also notes that the Complainant has submitted evidence that the disputed domain name was used to send a phishing email impersonating a purported employee of the Complainant, which further undermines any claim to legitimacy and will be addressed in the analysis of bad faith. Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity, here, claimed as phishing, distributing malware, unauthorized account access/hacking, impersonation/passing off, or other types of fraud) can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1.

For the reasons stated above, the Panel finds that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name, and that the second element under the Policy has been satisfied.

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.

The Panel concludes that there is substantial and compelling evidence indicating bad faith in this case. The Respondent registered the disputed domain name <equinor-supplychain.com>, which incorporates the Complainant's well-known and distinctive trademark EQUINOR in its entirety. The Complainant has demonstrated prior rights through multiple national and international trademark registrations. The Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant and has no authorization to use the mark. Given the global reputation of the EQUINOR brand, particularly in the energy sector and the use of the disputed domain name, the Panel finds that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant and its trademark at the time of registration.

Additionally, the disputed domain name includes the generic terms "supply" and "chain," which are directly related to the Complainant's business activities. This composition suggests an intent to associate the disputed domain name with the Complainant's operations, thereby increasing the likelihood of confusion among Internet users and reinforcing the presumption of bad faith.

UDRP panels have consistently held that the registration of a domain name incorporating a well-known trademark by an unaffiliated party may, in itself, be sufficient to establish bad faith. This is particularly true when the domain name includes descriptive or business-related terms that reinforce the association with the trademark holder ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.1.4). In this case, the presumption of bad faith remains unchallenged, as the Respondent has failed to submit any response or justification.

The Complainant has submitted objective evidence of active bad faith use. As detailed in Annex I to the Complaint, the Respondent activated MX records for the disputed domain name and used it to send a phishing email purporting to be an employee of the Complainant. The fraudulent email concerned payment and delivery of goods clearly demonstrating an attempt to deceive third parties by exploiting the Complainant's reputation. This conduct falls squarely within the scope of paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy, which addresses intentional attempts to attract Internet users for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's mark.

This type of impersonation and fraudulent use has been recognized as bad faith in other WIPO decisions. For example, in *Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. v. Abraham Hashim*, WIPO Case No. [DCO2019-0017](#), the Respondent impersonated employees of the complainant in phishing emails to clients, which the Panel found to be clear evidence of bad faith. Similarly, in *Gannett Co., Inc. v. Privacy Service Provided by Witheld for Privacy ehf / Sameul Sanders, Sam LCC*, WIPO Case No. [D2022-1233](#), the disputed domain name was used in a spear phishing campaign impersonating a company officer, and the Panel concluded that such use constituted bad faith under the Policy.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity also, as applicable to this case: phishing, constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.4. Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element under 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 <equinor-supplychain.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Marcello Do Nascimento/

Marcello Do Nascimento

Sole Panelist

Date: October 6, 2025