

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin v. brics shao
Case No. D2025-4082

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin, France, represented by Dreyfus & associés, France.

The Respondent is brics shao, Cambodia.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <michelinvn.com> is registered with Gname.com Pte. Ltd. (the “Registrar”).

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on October 7, 2025. On October 7, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On October 8, 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 October 8, 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 October 9, 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 October 13, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was November 2, 2025. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on November 4, 2025.

The Center appointed Nesrine Roudane as the sole panelist in this matter on November 11, 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

The Complainant, Compagnie Générale des Etablissements Michelin, is a leading French tire manufacturer established in 1889. Headquartered in Clermont-Ferrand, France, the Complainant operates in 170 countries, employs more than 124,000 people, and manages 117 tire manufacturing facilities worldwide. The Complainant is also internationally known for its MICHELIN Guide, first launched in 1920.

The record shows that Michelin has a formal corporate and commercial presence in Cambodia through the Branch Office of Michelin Asia (Singapore) Co., Pte. Ltd., established in Phnom Penh. This branch supports the nationwide distribution network for Michelin tires covering passenger cars, light commercial vehicles, and trucks and buses. Cambodia forms part of the Complainant's Viet Nam–Cambodia–Laos–Myanmar regional cluster.

The Complainant owns numerous trademark registrations for the MICHELIN mark globally. The following registrations are particularly relevant for this proceeding:

- Cambodia Trademark Registration No. KH/1992/202 for MICHELIN, registered on February 12, 1992, covering goods in International Classes 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28, and 34.
 - International Trademark Registration No. 771031 for MICHELIN, registered on June 11, 2001, designating multiple jurisdictions including Vietnam.
 - International Trademark Registration No. 1780534 for MICHELIN, registered on October 20, 2023.
- The Complainant also operates the domain name <michelin.com>, registered on December 1, 1993.

The disputed domain name <michelinvn.com> was registered on August 12, 2025. According to the undisputed evidence, the disputed domain name initially resolved to a website prominently displaying the Complainant's name and logo, with visuals mimicking the Complainant's official online presence. The website, written in Vietnamese, invited users to register and provide personal information, including an invitation code and payment-related data. At the time the Complaint was filed, the disputed domain name resolved to an error page.

The Respondent, identified as “brics shao” of Cambodia, has no known affiliation with the Complainant. Other than the details disclosed by the Registrar, no additional information is available regarding the Respondent's business activities or any legitimate use of the disputed domain name.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied all three elements required under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy for the transfer of the disputed domain name.

First, the Complainant asserts that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its well-known MICHELIN trademark, as it incorporates the mark in its entirety with the mere addition of the geographical abbreviation “vn”, commonly used to refer to Viet Nam. The Complainant submits that such addition does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity.

Second, the Complainant argues that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. The Respondent is neither affiliated with nor authorised by the Complainant to use the MICHELIN mark in any manner. According to the Complainant, the Respondent's prior use of the disputed domain name to host a website imitating the Complainant's official online presence—displaying its name and logo and inviting users to provide personal and payment-related information—cannot be regarded as a bona fide offering of goods or services, nor as a legitimate noncommercial or fair use.

Third, the Complainant submits that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. The Complainant contends that the Respondent targeted the MICHELIN mark, a globally recognised trademark, in order to mislead Internet users for commercial gain through impersonation and phishing. The subsequent passive holding of the disputed domain name does not, in the Complainant's view, negate bad faith, particularly in light of the Respondent's prior fraudulent use and failure to respond.

The Complainant accordingly requests that the disputed domain name be transferred to it.

B. Respondent

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

In the absence of any response, the Panel will proceed to a decision based on the Complaint and supporting evidence, drawing such inferences from the Respondent's default as the Panel considers appropriate pursuant to paragraph 14(b) of the Rules.

6. Discussion and Findings

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

Under paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy, the Complainant must establish that the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which it has rights.

The Complainant has demonstrated registered trademark rights in MICHELIN, including Cambodian and international registrations dating back several decades. As noted in section 1.2.1 of the [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), the location or jurisdiction of the trademark, its date of registration, and the goods and services for which it is registered are generally irrelevant for the purpose of this first element.

The disputed domain name <michelinvn.com> incorporates the Complainant's MICHELIN mark in its entirety. Numerous panels have found that where a domain name incorporates a complainant's trademark in full, this is typically sufficient to establish confusing similarity under paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy. See WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition, "[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)", section 1.7.

The addition of the geographical abbreviation "vn" (Viet Nam's ISO country code) does not avoid a finding of confusing similarity. Panels consistently hold that the addition of geographical terms or codes does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.8).

The Panel therefore finds that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's MICHELIN trademark. The Panel therefore finds that the Complainant has satisfied the requirements of paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Under paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy, the Complainant must show that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

The Complainant asserts that the Respondent is neither affiliated with nor authorised by it to use the MICHELIN mark. There is no evidence that the Respondent is commonly known by the disputed domain name, nor that it is making any legitimate noncommercial or fair use of it.

The record indicates that the disputed domain name was used for a website imitating the Complainant's branding, displaying the Complainant's name and logo, and prompting users to submit personal and payment-related information. Such use is not consistent with a bona fide offering of goods or services. Panels have consistently held that phishing, impersonation, or other fraudulent conduct can never confer rights or legitimate interests under the Policy ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.13.1).

Once a complainant makes a prima facie showing that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production shifts to the respondent. Here, the Respondent has provided no response and no evidence of any such rights.

The Panel therefore finds that the Complainant has satisfied the requirements of paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

Under paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, the Complainant must establish that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

The MICHELIN trademark is highly distinctive and internationally well known. The disputed domain name combines the mark with "vn", a geographic indicator for Viet Nam, where the Complainant maintains official operations. This strongly suggests that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant and intentionally targeted its trademark at the time of registration.

The evidence shows that the disputed domain name was used for a website reproducing the Complainant's name, logo, and visual identity, and inviting users to provide personal and payment-related information. This conduct constitutes clear impersonation. Panels have consistently found that such activity falls squarely within paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy, as it is intended to attract Internet users for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant's mark ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.4).

Although the disputed domain name later resolved to an error page, this passive holding does not prevent a finding of bad faith. Panels have held that passive holding can constitute bad faith where, as here, the complainant's mark is well known, the Respondent provides no explanation for its conduct, and there is evidence of prior fraudulent use ([WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.3).

The Panel therefore finds that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. The Panel therefore finds that the Complainant has satisfied the requirements of paragraph 4(a)(iii) 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 <michelinvn.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Nesrine Roudane/

Nesrine Roudane

Sole Panelist

Date: November 25, 2025