

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Soneva Management Private Limited v. Grand Amari, MANHATTAN
HOLIDAYS PVT LTD
Case No. D2026-2596

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Soneva Management Private Limited, Singapore, represented by Bird & Bird, United Kingdom.

The Respondent is Grand Amari, MANHATTAN HOLIDAYS PVT LTD, India, internally represented.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <thesonevaseasonshotelsandresorts.com> is registered with GoDaddy.com, LLC (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on June 15, 2026. On June 16, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On the same date, 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 (Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 17, 2026, 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 the same date.

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 June 19, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was July 9, 2026. The Respondent sent email communications to the Center on the same date and requested, on July 10, 2026, an additional four calendar days in which to respond to the Complaint as per paragraph 5(b) of the Rules. The Center granted the extension on the same day, and the new due date for Response was July 13, 2026. The Response was filed with the Center on July 13, 2026.

The Center appointed Jeremy Speres as the sole panelist in this matter on July 17, 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 and its group of companies, under the SONEVA mark, own and operate hotels, a holiday resort business, and other hospitality facilities and related assets that provide restaurant, accommodation, concierge, spa, and other luxury hospitality services, in addition to designing, developing, marketing, selling, and managing private villas and residences at resorts in the Maldives. The Complainant's resorts have received various awards, including being featured in the "World's 50 Best Hotels 2025" guide, the "Michelin Guide 2025", and the "Forbes Travel Guide 2025".

The Complainant's mark is registered in various jurisdictions, including European Union Trade Mark Registration No. 001426220 SONEVA (word), in classes 36, 39, and 42, having a registration date of January 31, 2001.

The Respondent's corporate entity, Manhattan Holidays Private Limited, was incorporated in 2019. The Respondent is a travel membership company and travel service provider offering affordable holiday memberships, hotel bookings, and travel packages primarily to middle-income consumers in India.

The disputed domain name was registered on March 31, 2026, as per the evidence submitted with the Complaint, and presently, resolves to a website entitled "Luxury Vacation Packages & Travel Deals | The Soneva Seasons Hotels and Resorts".

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 Respondent registered and has used the disputed domain name in bad faith to exploit the reputation of the SONEVA mark by creating a likelihood of confusion as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of its website for commercial gain. It further submits that the Respondent must have been aware of the distinctive SONEVA mark when registering the disputed domain name and that no plausible good-faith use of the disputed domain name is possible.

B. Respondent

The Respondent contends that the Complainant has not satisfied the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

Notably, the Respondent denies having registered or used the disputed domain name in bad faith, asserting that it independently adopted the name in good faith for its own travel business without knowledge of, or intent to target, the Complainant. It contends that its business, branding and pricing are distinct from the Complainant's luxury resort business, that there has been no impersonation, phishing, or attempt to pass itself off as the Complainant.

The Respondent further argues that it has acted honestly throughout and requests a finding of Reverse Domain Name Hijacking.

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 Select UDRP Questions ("[WIPO Overview 3.1](#)"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), 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 3.1](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms (here, "the", "seasons", "hotels", "and", and "resorts") may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such terms does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), 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 that 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 3.1](#), 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. As discussed in relation to bad faith below, it is more likely than not that the Respondent's intentions were to benefit from confusion with the Complainant's mark, and the Respondent's evidence is insufficient to refute this conclusion. The Respondent's use of the disputed domain name thus cannot confer rights or legitimate interests. *Sistema de Ensino Poliedro Vestibulares Ltda., Editora Poliedro Ltda. v. Anonymize, Inc. / STANLEY PACE*, WIPO Case No. [D2022-1981](#).

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.

For the following reasons, the Panel finds that it is more likely than not that the Respondent registered and has used the disputed domain name to take advantage of confusion with the Complainant's mark for the Respondent's commercial gain.

The Complainant claims that its SONEVA mark enjoys a “strong reputation” but has presented no evidence to this effect in the Complaint. Nevertheless, the Panel has independently¹ conducted limited Internet searches for the term “soneva” to assess the Complainant’s claim, and the results exclusively relate to the Complainant across the first five pages of results. This is the case even when the search results are a) time-limited to results published prior to registration of the disputed domain name, and b) limited to search results originating from websites in India. See *South African Bankers Services Company Proprietary Limited v. Zouhair Bairouk, ZouhaiInvest*, WIPO Case No. [D2025-5203](#). The Panel therefore accepts the Complainant’s claim that its mark enjoyed a reputation prior to registration of the disputed domain name.

The Respondent operates in the same general field of travel and hospitality as the Complainant, and in the circumstances, given the repute of the Complainant’s mark in that industry and the fact that its mark is overwhelmingly associated with the Complainant online, it appears likely that the Respondent was aware of the Complainant and the likelihood of confusion when it registered the disputed domain name. At least, the Respondent should have been aware of this. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.2.2.

The Respondent explains its choice of name as follows: “The Respondent independently conceived and adopted the brand ‘The Soneva Seasons Hotels and Resorts’ based upon its own business philosophy inspired by nature, the Sun and the changing seasons ... The Respondent’s brand philosophy is inspired by nature and the changing seasons. It reflects the idea that every season is a unique gift from the Sun, encouraging people to travel and experience different destinations throughout the year. The name was selected because it represented the Respondent’s own concept of promoting memorable travel experiences across all seasons.”

The Panel has, however, independently searched for any meaning for the word “soneva” using limited Internet searches. It appears that there is no meaning to “soneva” as such, and the Respondent has not presented any such meaning. In the circumstances, SONEVA appears to be an invented and inherently unique mark, which, coupled with the prior reputation of the mark in the same industry, makes any claim of independent conception by the Respondent unlikely. The Panel therefore does not accept the Respondent’s explanation for its adoption of the term “Soneva”.

On balance of probabilities, the Panel finds that the Respondent adopted the SONEVA mark in order to capitalize on confusion with the Complainant.

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 <thesonevaseasonshotelsandresorts.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Jeremy Speres/

Jeremy Speres

Sole Panelist

Date: July 21, 2026

¹ In accordance with its powers articulated inter alia in paragraphs 10 and 12 of the Rules, the Panel is entitled to conduct limited independent research into matters of public record. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 4.8.