Decision for dispute CAC-UDRP-108797

Case number	**CAC-UDRP-108797**
Time of filing	**2026-10-05 10:16:42**
Domain names	**novartisproject.com**

Case administrator

Organization	**Iveta Špiclová (Czech Arbitration Court) (Case admin)**

Complainant

Organization	**Novartis AG**

Complainant representative

Organization	**Abion GmbH**

Respondent

Name	**Dane LaFleur**

OTHER LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

The Panel is not aware of any other legal proceedings which are pending or decided and which relate to the disputed domain name.

IDENTIFICATION OF RIGHTS

Complainant is the owner of the international trademark NOVARTIS nr. 663765, date of registration 1 July 1996, and of the United States trademark NOVARTIS No. 2336960, registered on April 4, 2000.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

According to the information provided the disputed domain name <novartisproject.com> was registered on 26 September 2026.

According to the information provided by Complainant the disputed domain name currently does not resolve to an active website. Previously it resolved to the website of Complainant “www.novartis.com”. In addition, MX records have been set up.

PARTIES CONTENTIONS

Complainant
Complainant contends that the requirements of the Policy have been met and that the disputed domain name should be transferred to it.

According to the information submitted by Complainant, the Novartis Group is one of the biggest global pharmaceutical and healthcare groups. Novartis AG is the holding company of the Novartis Group. In 2025, Novartis achieved net sales of USD 54.5 billion, and total net income amounted to USD 14 billion and employed 75.267 full-time equivalent employees as of December 31, 2025.

According to Complainant the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to Complainant's trademark. The disputed domain name incorporates Complainant's well-known trademark NOVARTIS in its entirety and the term "project" as well as the generic Top-Level Domain ".com". The addition of the term "project" would not prevent a finding of confusing similarity to the trademark.

According to Complainant, Respondent has no rights or legitimate interest in the disputed domain name. Complainant has never granted Respondent any rights to use the NOVARTIS trademark in any form, including in the disputed domain name. Moreover, there is no evidence that Respondent is known by the disputed domain name or owns any corresponding registered trademarks. Complainant submits that Respondent has not been using, or preparing to use, the disputed domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of goods and services, nor making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. The structure of the disputed domain name, incorporating Complainant's trademark NOVARTIS in its entirety and the term "project", reveals that Respondent's intention in registering the disputed domain name was to refer to Complainant, its trademark and business activity and to create an association, and a subsequent likelihood of confusion, with Complainant and its NOVARTIS trademark in Internet users' mind. The term "project" directly refers to many aspects of the Novartis Group's business activity such as, for instance, the Novartis Pipeline. By reading the disputed domain name, Internet users may believe that it is directly connected or authorized by Complainant and that it will resolve to Complainant's official website, which is not the case. The disputed domain name has redirected to Complainant's website at "www.novartis.com". It is well established that unauthorized redirection to a complainant's website does not constitute evidence of rights or legitimate interest.

According to Complainant the disputed domain name is registered and is being used in bad faith. Complainant's trademark registrations significantly predate the registration of the disputed domain name and Respondent has never been authorized by Complainant to register the disputed domain name. It is therefore unplausible that Respondent did not know about Complainant, its products, and its NOVARTIS trademark when it registered the disputed domain name.

The disputed domain name has redirected to Complainant's website at "www.novartis.com". Such redirection aims at misleading Internet users in believing that the disputed domain name belonged to or is authorized by Complainant, which is not the case. It has been held that the redirection of the domain name to complainant's website is evidence of bad faith use.

Furthermore, active MX records are associated to the disputed domain name. There might therefore be a risk that corresponding e-mail addresses be used. Internet users receiving e-mails from e-mail addresses associated with the disputed domain name (such as "[...]@novartisproject.com"), combined with the fact that the disputed domain name resolves to Complainant's website, may be led to believe that they are personally contacted by Complainant.

The overall described circumstances are clear demonstration of the registration and use of the disputed domain name is in bad faith.

Respondent
No administratively compliant Response has been filed.

RIGHTS

Complainant has, to the satisfaction of the Panel, shown the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a trademark or service mark in which Complainant has rights (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a)(i) of the Policy).

NO RIGHTS OR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS

Complainant has, to the satisfaction of the Panel, shown Respondent to have no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Policy).

BAD FAITH

Complainant has, to the satisfaction of the Panel, shown the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith (within the meaning of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy).

PROCEDURAL FACTORS

The Panel is satisfied that all procedural requirements under UDRP were met and there is no other reason why it would be inappropriate to provide a decision.

PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR THE DECISION

In the opinion of the Panel the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to Complainant's trademark. Many UDRP decisions have found that a disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a complainant's trademark where the disputed domain name incorporates the complainant's trademark or the principal part thereof. Complainant has established that it is the owner of trademark registrations for NOVARTIS. The disputed domain name incorporates the well-known NOVARTIS trademark as its distinctive element, combined with the generic and descriptive term "project". The gTLD ".com" in the disputed domain name may be disregarded.
The Panel notes that Complainant's registration of its trademarks predates the creation date of the disputed domain name.

In the opinion of the Panel Complainant has made a prima facie case that Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interest in the disputed domain name. Complainant has not licensed or otherwise permitted Respondent to use its trademarks or to register the disputed domain name incorporating its marks. Respondent is not making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name without intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademarks of Complainant. Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain name nor has it acquired trademark rights. Complainant has no relationship with Respondent. The disputed domain name previously redirected to the official website of Complainant. The Panel finds that such redirecting by Respondent does not support any claim to rights or legitimate interests. In addition, based on the undisputed submission and evidence provided by Complainant at the time of the decision there is no website under the disputed domain name. Under these circumstances, the Panel finds that Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

The Panel finds that the disputed domain name has been registered and is being used in bad faith. Complainant has rights in the NOVARTIS trademark. Respondent knew or should have known that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to Complainant's well-known mark.

The Panel notes that at the time of the decision there is no active website at the disputed domain name. It is well established that non-use of a domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith use under the doctrine of passive holding (see section 3.3. of the WIPO Overview 3.1). The undisputed submission that there are MX records connected to the disputed domain name, suggests that it is unlikely that Respondent will be able to make any good faith use of the disputed domain name as part of an e-mail address.

The Panel finally notes that the current undeveloped use of the website and the prior use of the disputed domain name which incorporates the entirety of Complainant's well-known NOVARTIS trademark indicates that Respondent registered and used the disputed domain name with the intention to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to the website under the disputed domain name by creating a likelihood of confusion with the trademarks of Complainant as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of its website or location or of a service on its website or location, which constitutes registration and use in bad faith.

FOR ALL THE REASONS STATED ABOVE, THE COMPLAINT IS

Accepted

AND THE DISPUTED DOMAIN NAME(S) IS (ARE) TO BE

1. **novartisproject.com**: Transferred

PANELLISTS

Name	**Dinant T.L. Oosterbaan**

DATE OF PANEL DECISION 2026-11-09

Publish the Decision