

DICA INTRODUCES DETAILED CRITERIA FOR COMPANY NAME APPROVALS

Published: August 21, 2026

Author: Kaung Htet Zaw | Shwe Yee Thein

Practice Area: Corporate & Investment | Corporate Registration | Regulatory Compliance

KEY TAKEAWAY

On May 18 2026, the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (“DICA”) issued the **DICA Guidelines on Company Name Approvals**, providing more detailed criteria for assessing proposed company names under Sections 25 to 27 of the Myanmar Companies Law 2017 (“MCL”).

The Guidelines focus particularly on names that may be **identical or confusingly similar to existing company names**, as well as names containing **prohibited or restricted words and expressions**. Applicants should therefore undertake a name review before submitting their registration application to reduce the risk of rejection or delay.

Issuing Authority	DICA, Ministry of National Planning, Investment and Foreign Economic Relations
Issued on	May 18, 2026
Effective from	May 18, 2026
Legal Basis	Sections 25–27 of MCL
Applies to	Applicants seeking registration of company names
Main Focus	Similarity with existing names and prohibited or restricted words

WHAT IS DICA NOW LOOKING AT?

The Guidelines provide practical criteria for reviewing proposed company names. In broad terms, the assessment falls into **two main categories**:

1. Names that are Identical or Confusingly Similar

DICA may restrict a proposed name where it is considered too similar to an existing company name. The Guidelines identify several forms of similarity:

Type of Similarity	Illustrative Example
Exact or substantial similarity	“K.M.L Co., Ltd” vs. “KML Co., Ltd”
Addition of common terms	Adding “Group”, “Holding”, “International”, “Myanmar”, or “Family” to an existing name
Phonetic similarity	“Ayeyarwady Trading Co., Ltd” vs. “Irrawaddy Trading Co., Ltd”
Reordering of words	“Mandalay City Trading Co., Ltd” vs. “City Mandalay Trading Co., Ltd”
Visual similarity	“Khaing” vs. “Khine”

Potentially misleading associations	Names such as “Myanmar Thai” or “Myanmar China” where the combination may suggest a governmental, commercial, or bilateral association
Brand-name confusion	Use of the same brand name for different businesses where the public may believe the businesses are related

The Guidelines also address situations where a business name is combined with an abbreviation or abbreviated business description in a manner that may create confusion with an existing name.

2. Prohibited or Restricted Words and Expressions

Certain words and expressions may be restricted because they may create a misleading association or otherwise be considered inappropriate.

Category	Examples / Key Concern
Government-related terms	“State”, “Central Bank”, “Union Government”, “President”, “Ministry”, “Department”, “Office”, and similar expressions suggesting a government connection
International organizations	Names suggesting an affiliation with organizations such as the UN, WHO, or ASEAN
Sensitive or inappropriate expressions	Terms that may be culturally or religiously sensitive, offensive, or likely to cause conflict or disputes
Political or situational expressions	Political terms or names considered inappropriate in light of prevailing circumstances

THE REGISTRAR CAN REQUIRE A COMPANY TO CHANGE ITS NAME

The Guidelines should be read together with **Section 26 of MCL**. Where a registered company name is found to contravene the applicable requirements or is otherwise considered unsuitable, the Registrar may require the company to change its name.

This means that company-name approval is not necessarily the end of the assessment process. A name that has already been registered may still be subject to action by the Registrar where the statutory requirements are not met.

WHAT SHOULD BUSINESSES DO?

Before submitting a company-name application, applicants should consider:

✓	Question
---	----------

☐	Is the proposed name identical or confusingly similar to an existing company name?
☐	Does the name merely add a common word such as “Group”, “Myanmar”, or “International” to an existing name?
☐	Could the name create an impression of a government or international-organization connection?
☐	Does the name contain sensitive, inappropriate, or restricted terminology?
☐	Could the proposed name create confusion with an existing brand or business?

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY

The Guidelines provide greater clarity on the factors DICA may consider when reviewing proposed company names. Businesses should therefore conduct an appropriate name search and consider the Guidelines at the **name-selection stage**, rather than waiting for DICA to raise objections during the registration process.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this newsletter is for general informational and educational purposes only and is not intended to be, nor should it be interpreted as, legal advice or a formal legal opinion. No reader should act, or refrain from acting, based on the contents of this update without first seeking professional legal counsel tailored to their specific circumstances and jurisdiction. For comprehensive legal support or specific inquiries regarding your company’s compliance, please contact our team directly at firm@iicole.com.

KEY CONTACTS:



Kaung Htet Zaw
Partner
T. 95-9-422525375
E. khz@iicole.com



Shwe Yee Thein
Paralegal
T. 95-9-453207299
E. syt@iicole.com