TreeSisters Greenwash Guidance

1. TreeSisters' first requirement before engaging with *any* company is that it is not "greenwashing".

2. Greenwash describes the making of a false or exaggerated claim about products or services with regard to their environmental (or indeed social) attributes, source materials or other connections (e.g. a partnership with a wildlife charity implies that the company cares about wildlife while they may be directly responsible for large scale on-going harm to wildlife).

3. Oxford English Dictionary defines it as: "Disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image." [1]

4. TreeSisters is especially sensitive to greenwash claims about forests, their management and wood derived products and therefore need to ensure there is no evidence of such misleading claims before entering into a relationship with a business (including accepting a direct donation).

5. TreeSisters is guided by UK government advice on green claims:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/make-a-green-claim Please ensure that your company and any claims you make follow this advice.
Further guidance can be found in the standard ISO 14021 *Environmental labels and declarations -Self-declared environmental claims (Type II environmental labelling)*.
A brief summary of that standard can be found here:
https://www.globalgreentag.com/overview-of-iso-14021-rules/

6. TreeSisters works on the basis of "no claim, no blame". By this we mean that we do not expect companies we work with to be perfect in terms of their environmental, sustainability and social impact performance. We do however expect all our partners to tell the truth when making claims about these impact and performance areas.

7. We often see misleading claims being made about wood and wood products. We are certain that in a great many of these instances there is no intent to mislead. Nonetheless we need to see that all such claims, when made, are correct and can be substantiated. Remember that many products are derived from wood and forests that may not be immediately obvious: E.g. Clothing material – viscose, rayon, Modal, TENCEL etc; "non timber forest products" (NTFPs) such as rattan, rubber, some bamboo, forest grown nuts, mushrooms or honey etc.

   1. Misuse of wood certification system trademarks, in all cases for all certification systems or labels (e.g. FSC, PEFC, EU Ecolabel, Blue Angel, Fairtrade etc.). Please check with the trademark owners first before using the labels, don't make any assumptions that just because you have (or think you have) certified material in your supply chain that you can make a claim about it.
   - Misuse example: Use of the term "FSC certified" when the user does not have the correct

permission or certification in place. Please note that with certification systems that the name of the system is usually also a registered trademark (not just the label or logo), therefore you need to have permission to use it if you are making a claim about a product. Just because your supplier tells you that the wood they supply is FSC certified does not mean you can just use the FSC trademarks, you must check in with FSC first and be checked and registered (or certified if necessary) https://www.fsc-uk.org/en-uk/business-area/use-the-logo.

2. Use of the term "sustainable" or similar (e.g. "responsibly managed", "well managed", "eco-forestry" etc) without independent certification of the claim. Please don't make claims like these as if there has been no independent third-party inspection against an independent and recognised standard it is very hard to prove such a statement is true and very well may not be.

-Greenwash examples: "This greetings card is made from card sourced from sustainably managed forests." Or: "Our product is sustainable because it is made of materials derived from trees, which are a renewable resource."

3. Use of very vague terms that can't be readily defined is also advised against (see the UK government guidance and ISO 14021 detailed in 5 above).

-Vague terms examples: "forest friendly"; "environmentally friendly"; "eco-friendly", "renewable".