Marion Verles
Nexus-Carbon for Development, Cambodia

Civil Society observer:
- Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) Sub-Committee

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Marion Verles is the Executive Director of Nexus-Carbon for Development. Nexus is a cooperative of development organizations that support vulnerable communities by scaling up successful climate-friendly projects. This nonprofit and collaborative structure enables members to share expertise and services, access technical assistance and international funding opportunities such as carbon finance. Nexus is registered in Singapore and Cambodia and supported by the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM).

The organization

Nexus members are award-winning development organizations, including social enterprises and NGOs, recognized for their significant impact in their fields. They have active projects in Asia and Africa. They created Nexus to benefit from economies of scale, reduced risks, and a strong voice in the global community. “We commit to work together to create a new organization that will use carbon finance to reduce poverty, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and where possible achieve other benefits such as improved human health and conservation of biodiversity, in a sustainable manner.”, says the Charter of the Nexus founders.

By essence, Nexus is about development organizations pooling risks and resources to scale up climate-friendly development projects and to speak with a common voice at the regional and international levels. By bringing together multiple stakeholders and building awareness on core advocacy topics, Nexus has been actively engaged in a number of regional networking activities such as leading the Rural Energy & Climate Initiative (RECI). The RECI is a movement inspired by field development practitioners concerned by the lack of appropriate financial resources available for the mass dissemination of clean and affordable rural energy solutions. This initiative, supported by the blue moon fund and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), brought together project developers and financiers during a series of workshops and remote interactions. More recently, Nexus initiated discussions around the issue of “Fairness and transparency in climate funding: Taking into account the needs of the poorest populations”, through a workshop held in 2012 in Bangkok and the creation of a working group in 2013.

Marion moved to Cambodia early 2009 with the mission to set up and launch Nexus. She has successfully accomplished her task as Nexus now brings together 18 member organizations from over a dozen countries, operates a fully-fledged services platform and set a financial mechanisms dedicated to the scaling up of low carbon pro poor interventions.

Prior to setting up Nexus, Marion gained experience in the corporate development team of Barclays PLC in London where she worked on capital raisings and acquisitions. If you ask her
about her years in the City, she'll say that “There is no experience like the one that takes you deep inside the world you are trying to change”.

Marion holds a Master of Science from EDHEC business school (France) and a Master of Public Management (Ecole Nationale d'Administration, Paris and Royal University of Law and Economics, Phnom Penh).

**Working with the CIF**

Following a selection process including a poll, Marion was appointed Civil Society Observer for the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) Pilot Program for Climate Resilience. Nexus’ application was supported by an important number of votes from the civil society. Nexus is now responsible for sharing information with its constituency about the key issues and activities of the CIF committee. This includes soliciting feedback from constituents and reporting that feedback to the CIF committee. “Nexus has gained significant experience in bringing together development organizations around advocacy positions. We would like to bring to the Climate Investment Funds the voice of those directly impacted by climate change, the voice of development practitioners from the field. They do not have the capacity to follow the discussions happening in Washington, we are their channel through which they access information and share their concerns”, said Marion Verles. “Observers have a crucial role to play to ensure projects are well designed and take into account local needs. We also want to share lessons learnt with future financing mechanisms.”

Nexus can rely on its large network of members and partners, but also on its relationships with civil society and government institutions in Cambodia. In October 2011, Nexus and the Ministry of Environment of the Royal Government of Cambodia signed a Memorandum of Understanding formalizing their cooperation over the next three years to facilitate access to climate finance (including carbon finance) for projects that have real and tangible benefits for the people of Cambodia; and to establish a fair and transparent framework for climate finance (including carbon finance) interventions in Cambodia.