
H2O AM accelerates its development with the appointment of a Chief Sales and Marketing Officer, member of the Global Executive Committee, and opens a new office in Switzerland



H2O AM is accelerating its development with the creation of a department dedicated to investor relations in order to continue to best meet the needs of its clients. Therefore, H2O AM is pleased to announce that Babak Abrar joined the group as a Chief Sales and Marketing Officer.

After more than 13 years at Natixis Investment Managers, during which he was always a close partner of H2O AM, Babak Abrar naturally assumes responsibility for this new department, dedicated to Distribution, Communication, Client Servicing and Marketing. He will be a member of the Global Executive Committee.

Already established in London, Paris, Singapore and Monaco, H2O AM is also strengthening its distribution organization by opening a new office in Geneva. Cédric Ludwig and Mickael Benzakin will co-lead the distribution to clients across Switzerland and Luxembourg.

This new major step is part of the overall development strategy of H2O AM with respect to its distribution activity. Swiss investors, who were among the first to partner with H2O AM when it was created more than 10 years ago, have developed a very strong bond with the management company and its teams. Institutionalizing this link, with a local office, is a natural step for H2O AM to continue to provide a high quality of service and maintain the proximity to its clients in the region.

Bruno Crastes, CEO and Founder of H2O AM: “The creation of this new department dedicated to investor relations is strategic for H2O AM and I am delighted with the arrival of Babak, whose qualities and experience are well established, to lead it. In the same way, the choice to open an office in Geneva testifies to our conviction of the potential of H2O AM in this market that is key to our development and where we know how to bring a differentiating offer thanks to our Global Macro expertise. As such, I am delighted to welcome Cedric Ludwig and Mickael Benzakin, whom we have been working with for many years, in the H2O AM family. Cédric and Mickael are recognized professionals, they are a real asset to H2O AM and our clients.”

Babak Abrar, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer: “After over a decade of close partnership with H2O AM, I am thrilled to officially join the company to continue its development by relying on the expertise of its teams. The arrival of Cedric and Mickael, to co-head the coverage of Swiss and Luxembourg clients, will be great additions to the team and is the perfect example. Their understanding of our partners' needs and technical knowledge strengthen our relationships with our investors. I strongly believe in the value of active management and am confident that the high conviction investment approach of H2O AM will continue to find a privileged place in client portfolios.”

Cédric Ludwig and Mickael Benzakin, Co-Heads distribution in Switzerland and Luxembourg : “It is a fantastic opportunity to join one of the most talented teams in the market in absolute return and fixed income space. We are delighted to evolve within a company where passion and fortitude are core values.”

The opening of this office in Geneva is part of the gradual takeover of H2O AM’s distribution and investor relations activities, linked to the proposed sale of Natixis IM’s stake in the management company. H2O AM will also soon announce the creation of a communication department.

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Babak Abrar

Before joining H2O AM in August 2021, Babak Abrar worked for over 13 years at Natixis Investment Managers as an Executive Managing Director. Co-head of the distribution for Western Europe, he was leading a team of over 50 people, covering financial intermediaries, family offices, institutional and private banks in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the French-speaking part of Switzerland, Monaco and Israel.

He joined the Natixis group in 2008 when he opened the Swiss office in Geneva. He was then responsible for the firm's institutional investors and financial intermediaries in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

Babak has more than eighteen years' experience in the financial industry. He started his career at J.P. Morgan (Suisse) SA and then worked in the pension fund Business Development division at Lombard Odier. Babak Abrar holds a Master's degree in Management, with a specialization in Finance, from the HEC Lausanne School of Economics in Switzerland and a Foundation for Business Leadership certificate from IMD.



Cédric Ludwig

Before joining H2O AM in August 2021, Cedric Ludwig worked at Natixis Investment Managers as a Senior Director Sales Manager, in charge of the fund distribution across independent asset managers, family offices and domestic banks in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

Previously, Cédric worked for Credit Suisse as an Investment Advisor, managing a portfolio of independent asset managers. Cédric also was the Head of Investment Strategy in Oleium, a multi-family office, based in New York. He began his career in finance in the Investment Advisory team at Lombard Odier.

Cedric holds a Master's degree in Management, with a specialization in Finance, from HEC Lausanne School of Economics (Switzerland) and an advanced certificate (CAS) in Global Affairs from New York University (NYU). Cédric is both a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) and a Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst (CAIA) charterholder.



Mickael Benzakin

Before joining H2O AM in August 2021, Mickael Benzakin worked for over 9 years at Natixis Investment Managers as a Director Sales Manager. He was in charge of the fund distribution, covering private banks and independent asset managers based in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and Monaco. He also covers both institutional and wholesale markets in Israel.

Mickael began his career at BNP Paribas in Paris and then worked as a multi-asset structured products junior sales.

Mickael holds a Master's degree in Financial Engineering from the University of Paris-Dauphine.