

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

JEAN WILHELMY – SENIOR VICE-PRÉSIDENT, NATURAL RESSOURCES, MANUFACTURER AND SERVICES, FONDS DE SOLIDARITÉ FTQ

Jean Wilhelmy joined the Fonds de solidarité FTQ, where he is currently Senior Vice-President, Natural Resources, Manufacturers and Services, in September 2009. He holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from HEC Montréal and has 40 years' experience. He has worked in the venture and development capital sector for various firms, including BDC, Investissement Desjardins, Énergie Capital, Hydro-Québec Capitech and SGF. His duties have led him to serve on the Boards of Directors of more than 30 private and public companies and non-profit organizations. He has been a Board member for Finance Montréal since its creation in 2010, Montréal International since 2013 and SODES since 2017. He has also taught Project Financing course at HEC Montréal where he has been an Associate Professor of Executive Education.



M. Wilhelmy, if you were to remember only one thing from these last 35 years working for the transport sector, what would it be?

«The transport sector is in the Fonds de solidarité FTQ's DNA.»

The Fonds has been involved in road transport from the very outset with an initial investment, 30 years ago, in Cabano Expeditex, which went on to become the North American leader TransForce.

Then, 25 years ago, it invested in Groupe Robert and Transat, and, in 2000, in Canadian Helicopters (now HNZ). Finally, in the air transport sector, it invested in Nolinor in 2011. After an indepth study of Québec's transport sector as a whole, logic dictated, in 2013, that we analyze the shipping sector more closely, given its enormous economic development potential and importance for our economy. After 35 years, more than ever, we are looking to the future in continuing to move in this direction.

The Fonds de solidarité FTQ supports the Québec government's Maritime Strategy. Can you tell us how, concretely?

When the government and Minister D'Amour implemented the Québec Maritime Strategy, we invested \$100 M as part of a \$300 M envelope to fund the development of logistical hubs.

«We agreed to this immediately as it coincides perfectly with our wish to develop the marine sector within the Fonds while supporting an economic development strategy that we felt made sense.»

The Maritime Strategy has 10 components that are relevant for helping the marine sector grow. A first project was announced on June 5, 2018 in the context of a \$30 M financial contribution—\$10 M by Capital Logistique Québec (CLQ)—to La Coop fédérée to fund a project assessed at more than \$90 M for the construction of a maritime terminal for grain exporting.

Many SODES member organizations are also Fonds partner firms. Can you give us some examples of how the Fonds supports them?

Our first incursion into the marine sector dates from the repatriation of ownership of Montreal Gateway Terminals (MGT), a key strategic asset at the Port of Montréal, which was held by a US infrastructure fund managed by Morgan Stanley. Under the leadership of Axiom Infrastructures, the Fonds joined other Québec and Canadian investors in a 100% buyback of this entity.

This initial investment was followed by a second, in Logistec, a Québec marine sector flagship firm, to help it complete the financial structure required to enable it to acquire a majority share in an Ontario environment-sector company and two US cargo handling companies to extend their marine services to the US coast of the Gulf of Mexico. We are currently in the final phase of two major marine sector-related projects.

«We intend to pursue this direction and firmly believe that this sector constitutes a key economic development vector for a healthy economy and the creation of quality jobs.»

After we became involved in the marine sector, the Fonds decided to join SODES as an active member in 2016 and to have a representative on its Board of Directors in 2017. This confirms our commitment to the marine industry and its participants.

In your opinion, what are the key challenges the marine industry will face in the coming years?

The transport industry is constantly evolving and must adapt to economic, demographic and technological changes on an ongoing basis.

The vitality of the global economy and of trade significantly affects cargo and passenger transport. Any economic slowdown will clearly have repercussions on cargo volumes transported and on transport company performance.

The shortage of skilled workers impacts many industries, including the transport sector. This will certainly be a significant challenge to meet in the coming years, given the aging population.

The Québec shipping sector could also be confronted with a number of phenomena affecting the industry such as: growing ship size, cargo transshipment in super hubs, aging maritime and land-based infrastructures, implementation or renegotiation of the various free trade agreements, increased port capacity on the US eastern seaboard and transport intermodality. soutenir cette industrie et les entreprises qui la composent dans leurs projets de croissance.

«The industry's bases remain solid and the services it offers are essential for economic development, in particular due to the importance of international trade and market globalization.»

The Fonds de solidarité FTQ will therefore continue to support this industry and the firms composing it in their growth initiatives.