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## JP GARVIN

### GDI Ventures



**J**P Garvin, from Ballina in Co Mayo, was working in the oil and gas industry in Mayo when an opportunity came his way to move into the renewable energy sector in the UK in 2015.

As there was no similar opportunity at home, JP seized the chance and moved to Scotland in 2015. He spent over six years working all across Scotland before deciding to return home for family reasons. “My eldest daughter is six. I always promised to be home for the years she’d remember most,” he says.

On his return, JP set up GDI Ventures, a civil engineering infrastructure contractor in the renewable energy market, in partnership with a friend from his schooldays.

“We set up the business in December of 2021, and I immediately started working through contacts I had in renewable energy and from my days working in Ireland. We had a good run of success at the start. We won three of our first five tenders, and we

secured two maintenance contracts – all in the first month,” he says.

GDI Ventures is based in Ballina, but the work involves travelling around Ireland. “There’s some travel but nothing compared with what I had to do in Scotland. I was doing anything from 20 to 40 hours a week in a car there. I get a lot more quality time with the children now,” he says.

While that is a welcome benefit of being home, JP says re-establishing a network of business contacts has been challenging. “You are almost reintroducing yourself to people you lost professional contact with,” he says. “Being unknown makes it hard to get credit off suppliers and to build up a reputation. I had worked in renewable energy for several years, but I didn’t do that in Ireland. Trying to convince people that the knowledge I gained in Scotland was equally as good a standard and applicable in Ireland was challenging.”

JP found that the Back for Business programme helped him to develop the

skills required to run a business and that the participants were a good source of support for each other. “You are dealing with a lot of other people who are starting up and returning as well, so you get a lot of tips on things. We’re all learning as we go. There’s nothing like discussions with other business owners to get real practical help,” he says.

“Then you have a Lead Entrepreneur who successfully scaled his business who gave good advice. While I would be very good technically in my field, I wouldn’t be a businessman. There is a learning curve there that is still ongoing, but I got good steers on practical aspects of running a business.”

GDI Ventures already has 11 employees and is exploring partnerships in the sector to help scale the business. JP’s immediate focus is on securing a major renewables contract in the next few months. “There are a few tenders open. Securing one of those would quadruple our turnover. It would be a significant scaling of the business and quite a successful year,” he says.

#### POSITION

Managing Director

#### WHAT WE DO

Civil engineering infrastructure in the renewable energy market.

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