



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

Link Modules

Case Study 2020

Climate Entrepreneur

In June 2019, the Government of Ireland launched the Climate Action Plan to address the impacts of the climate emergency on Ireland's environment, society, economic and natural resources. Jim, a resident of Ballyglas, recently attended a meeting of his Local Community Group which has recently joined the Sustainable Energy Community Network and is working on an Energy Master Plan in partnership with Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI).

While sitting at this meeting, Jim realised that there were business opportunities involved in increasing the energy efficiency in homes. He learned that a key aim of the *Climate Action Plan* is to reduce Ireland's dependency on fossil fuels. To achieve this, the installation of oil boilers will be banned by 2022 and gas boilers by 2025. In order to move from fossil fuels to renewable energy heating systems, 600,000 heat pumps will be installed by 2030, of which 400,000 will be retrofitted into existing buildings.

Jim has worked as a qualified plumber for the last ten years. He enjoyed the job security that came with being an employee but has always aspired to setting up his own business one day. He believes he has the necessary skills to become an entrepreneur. After the meeting, he researched the new air to water heat pumps. He researched their sources, costs and installation criteria. He discovered he would need to upskill himself in order to meet the SEAI criteria to register as someone who can install heat pumps. He visited a house that had recently installed an air to water heat pump and spoke with the owners regarding their experience of this heating system. He met with a Technical Advisor from SEAI who recommended that Jim would attend a SEAI workshop on renewable energy heating systems.

Jim made an appointment with the Local Enterprise Office to discuss the risks, challenges and benefits of setting up his own company. He was assigned a business mentor who discussed the different options for establishing himself as a sole-trader, a partnership or setting up a public limited company. He learned about professional indemnity; employers insurance; health and safety legislation. They discussed location, staff requirements and promoting his business.

Jim's mentor made him realise that preparation is the single most important thing he could do to ensure his business gets off the ground. His mentor suggested that Jim should sign up to the Local Enterprise Office *Start Your Own Business* programme. This programme guides potential entrepreneurs through the various aspects of business planning. In particular, Jim should attend the module dealing with basic bookkeeping as this is something he is not familiar with.

Jim decided he was willing to take a risk and launched *Jim's Green Heating*. He invested his personal savings in the business along with securing a small business loan from his local bank. Initially, he decided that he would set up as a sole-trader with a view to expansion if the business grows.