

JBS wins Garda uniform contract

An Garda Síochána has awarded a three-year contract to Monaghan company, James Boylan Safety Ltd (JBS Group) to supply uniforms to 14,000 Gardaí.

Valued at €12.6 million, the deal will see JBS supply the Garda Reserve, students at the Garda Training College and Gardaí on UN duties with a customised 'person pack', which will contain their entire uniform requirement, including standard uniforms, security gear, wet-wear, high-visibility clothing and ceremonial dress-wear.

The contract was awarded after a two-year competitive tender process overseen by the Government Supplies Agency in consultation with senior Garda management, according to Lee Gartland, national sales manager of JBS.

"We did a lot of research into what was required in terms of both the service and sourcing the product," said Gartland. "We had to be able to assure the Garda Síochána and the government that we had solid financial credentials and the relevant experience." Gartland said JBS saw off competition from ten rival companies to secure the deal.



"There were a number of English companies who are currently supplying the Ministry of Defence and British police departments, along with other Irish competitors," he said. Gartland said production of the different items would take place in factories in ten countries, including China, Indonesia, Thailand, Britain and Ireland.

"Our managing director, Declan O'Donnell, along with our quality control team and representatives from the GSA, will go out to check that the quality coming off the lines is up to standard," said Gartland. "For a small Monaghan company, we now have to have tentacles all around the world. We have devised a customised software package to track all the information."

JBS is headquartered in Milltown, Co Monaghan. Formed in 1944 as a shoe manufacturer, it employs 55 staff at branches in Monaghan, Dublin, Cork, Belfast and Derry.

The privately-owned company supplies safety, hygiene, uniform and specialist clothing products to over 3,000 customers including the Irish Defence Forces, Irish Coastguard, the Office of Public Works and the Revenue Commissioners. It has a turnover of €15 million.

With an aggressive all-island acquisition strategy JBS has expanded its presence across the country over the past three years. "In 2005, we acquired DL Safety in Cork and we still have an office and warehouse there," said Gartland. "Later in 2005, we bought Glendermott Universal in Derry, and we have a 16,000 square feet facility there. In December 2007, we acquired WJ Nelson in Belfast." Earlier this year, JBS acquired Vard Corporate Clothing in Dublin. "We have a lot of the back office stuff, but Vard has been in business for about 20 years, supplying uniforms and suits to customers including VHI, Cafe Bar Deli and O2's retail stores," said Gartland. "We took them over so they could help us with fittings, for example in this tender, and to access their customer base and their reputation."