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Department of Education

How to Create Mini-Competition & Send Invitations to Tender within DPS.

Schoolbook Scheme

April 2025

Contents

Introduction

This guidance is designed to assist post-primary school leaders of Voluntary, Community and Comprehensive Schools with creating a Mini-Competition under the Dynamic Purchasing System for the Supply of Schoolbooks (DPS) and publishing it on the eTenders platform.

You can access eTenders at https://www.etenders.gov.ie/.

You can find more details about the Post-Primary Scheme can be found in the 'Schoolbooks Grant Guidance for Post Primary Schools 2025 - 2026' which is available here.

Further guidance documents and resources designed to help schools with procurement are also available on https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8d18b-schoolbooks-scheme-in-post-primary-schools/ and https://www.spu.ie/post-primary-schools/.

Schools that have total schoolbook contracts in excess of €50,000 Euro excluding VAT will be required to procure schoolbooks through the DPS. Where the total contract value is less than €50,000 Euro excluding VAT schools will be encouraged to use the DPS.

This guide should be read after you have (a) registered on eTenders, (b) registered for the DPS using the form available on Schools Procurements Support (SPU) website, and (c) amended tender documents.

There is a checklist listing all the required steps in tendering process under the DPS. You can download it by visiting SPU website: https://www.spu.ie/post-primary-schools/

Creating a new Mini-Competition within the DPS

There are five tasks that need to be followed in order to create a Mini-Competition and send invitations to tender to DPS members (i.e. pre-qualified suppliers):

1. Create Specific Contract and Workspace Information
2. Finalise Workspace Information
3. Associate PO/TC user
4. Define Workflow
5. Send Invitations – Add tender documents and send invitations to DPS members

There is a video showing how to complete these tasks here.

Note: If you have any issues or questions, send those to the **dedicated Helpline** available at postprimaryschoolbooks@education.gov.ie or 01 8892089.

1. Task 1: Create Specific Contract and Workspace Information

1.1 List of DPSs

First, log into your Contracting Authority Procurement Coordinator (CAPC) profile on eTenders website.

To create a new CFT Workspace for the Mini-Competition you need to first access the DPS. To do so, click on "**CFT Management**" and then "**List of CA DPSs**" as seen in Figure 2.1

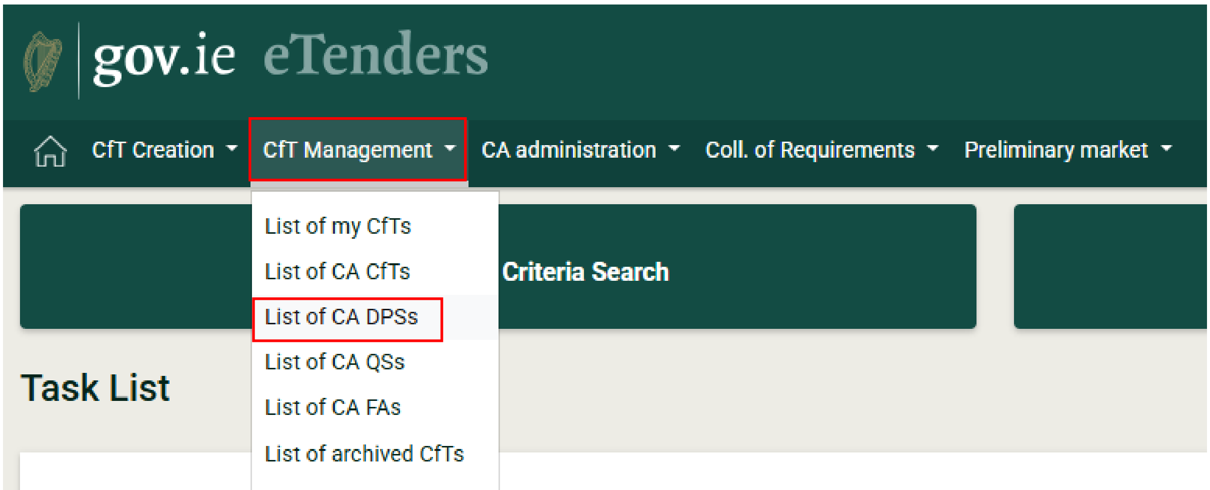

Figure 2.1

This will load a webpage with the DPS similar to the one in Figure 2.2 below. To proceed, you need to **click on the title of the DPS** for the supply of schoolbooks: “CL3028DPS - Dynamic Purchasing System for the Supply of Schoolbooks incl eBooks to Community and Comprehensive, and Voluntary Secondary Schools (excluding ETB schools) within the Free Education Scheme”.

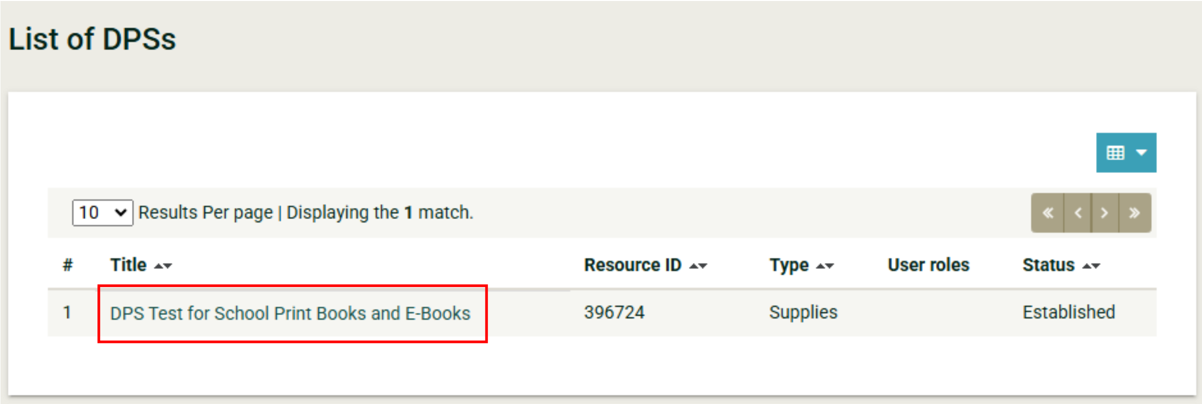

Figure 2.2

Note: If you cannot see any entries here, make sure that you have previously registered for the DPS using the form on SPU website. The link to the registration form can be accessed here.

1.2 DPS Menu and Specific Contracts

This will open a webpage called “View DPS Workspace” with details of the DPS listed below and a menu button on the right hand-side called **“Show DPS Menu”** (Fig. 2.3)

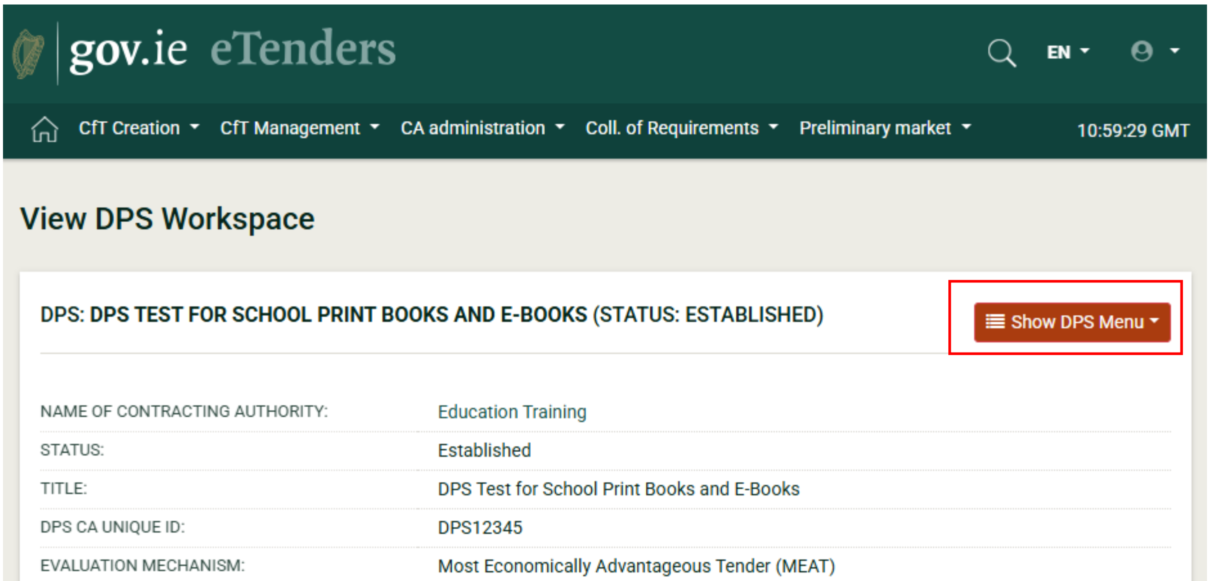

Figure 2.3

Click on the “Show DPS Menu” and choose **“Specific contracts”** (Fig. 2.4)

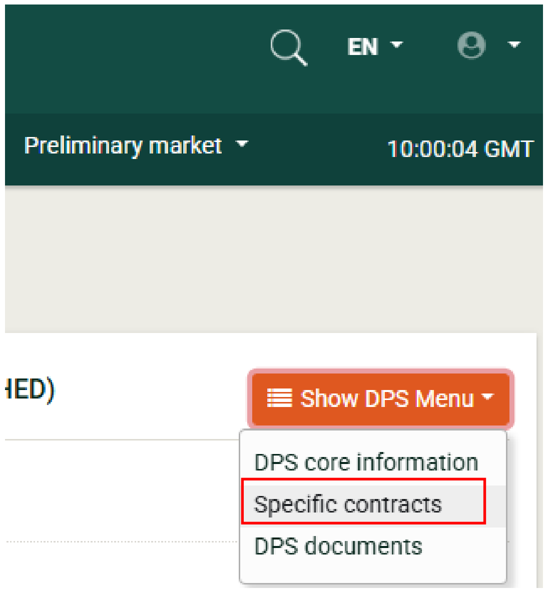

Figure 2.4

This will open a page with all the Lots within the DPS, similar to the one shown in Figure 2.5 below.

Schools should create contracts under their preferred chosen Lot. It should be the same as the one they initially registered for using the form on SPU website.

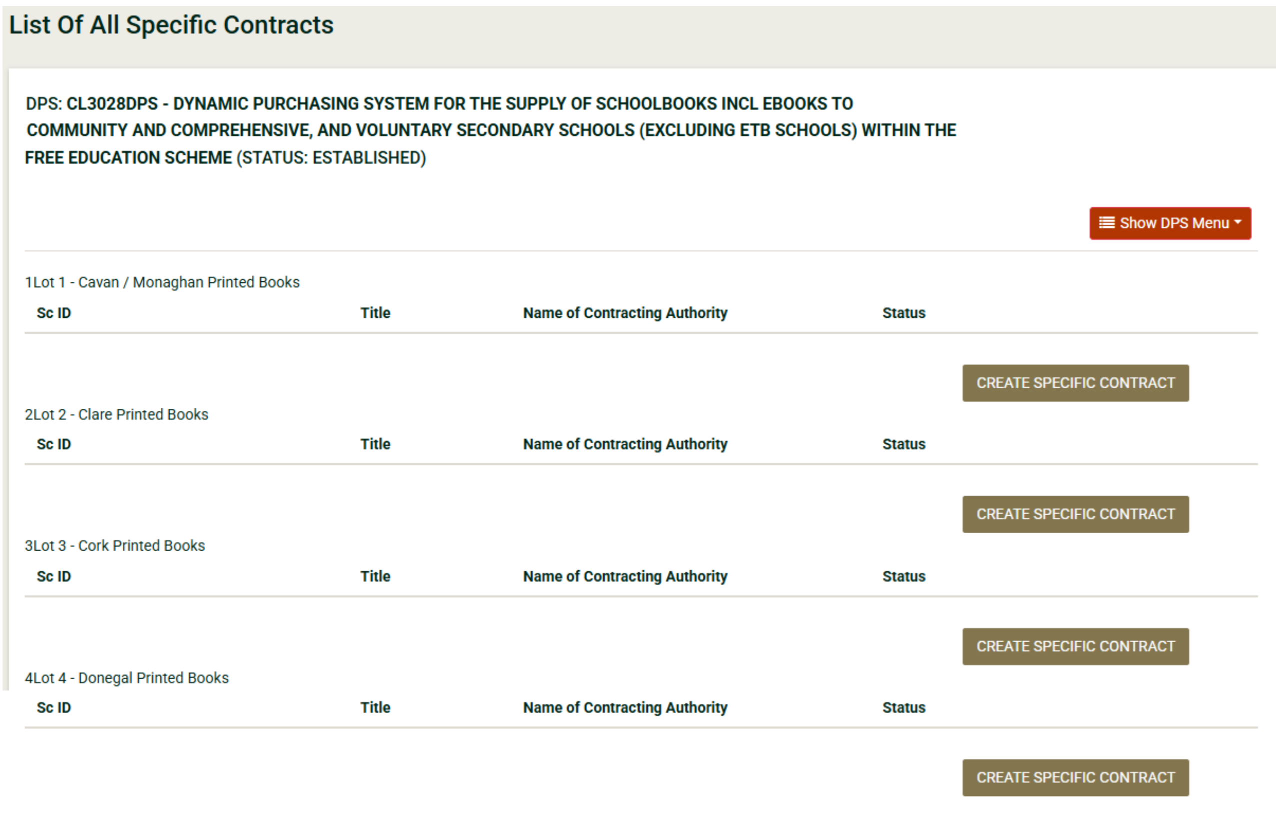

Figure 2.5

Click on “**Create Specific Contract**” situated **<u>below</u>** the lot heading to proceed. (Fig. 2.6)

Note: Only DPS members admitted to this specific Lot will be able to be invited to school’s Mini-Competition. Creating a Mini-Competition under a different Lot can result in no submissions made and require the school to restart the tendering process.

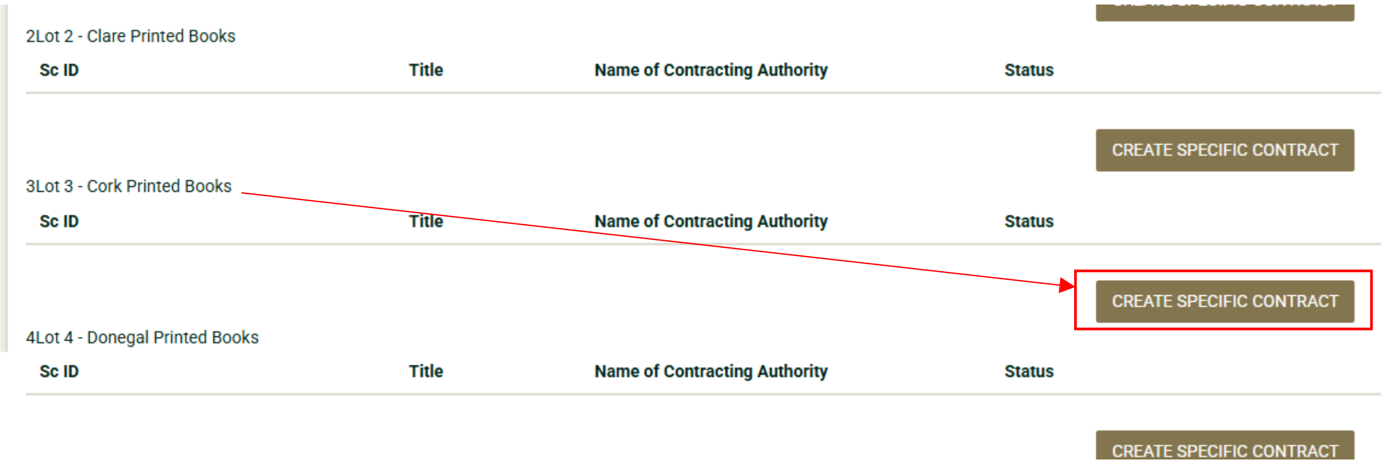

Figure 2.6

Important! In order to create a contract under the preferred Lot, users need to click on “**Create Specific Contract**” that appears **<u>below each lot’s heading</u>**. This should be the Lot the school initially registered for using the form on SPU website.

The lots are as follows:

- Lot 1: Cavan / Monaghan Printed Books
- Lot 2: Clare Printed Books
- Lot 3: Cork Printed Books
- Lot 4: Donegal Printed Books
- Lot 5: Dublin Printed Books
- Lot 6: Galway Printed Books
- Lot 7: Kerry Printed Books
- Lot 8: Kildare Printed Books
- Lot 9: Kilkenny / Carlow Printed Books
- Lot 10: Laois / Offaly Printed Books
- Lot 11: Limerick Printed Books
- Lot 12: Longford / Leitrim Printed Books
- Lot 13: Louth Printed Books
- Lot 14: Mayo Printed Books
- Lot 15: Meath Printed Books
- Lot 16: Sligo / Roscommon Printed Books
- Lot 17: Tipperary Printed Books
- Lot 18: Waterford Printed Books
- Lot 19: Westmeath Printed Books
- Lot 20: Wexford Printed Books
- Lot 21: Wicklow Printed Books
- Lot 22: eBooks

1.3 Workspace Information

After clicking on “**Create Specific Contract**” under preferred Lot, a page with a series of fields will open. Fig 2.7

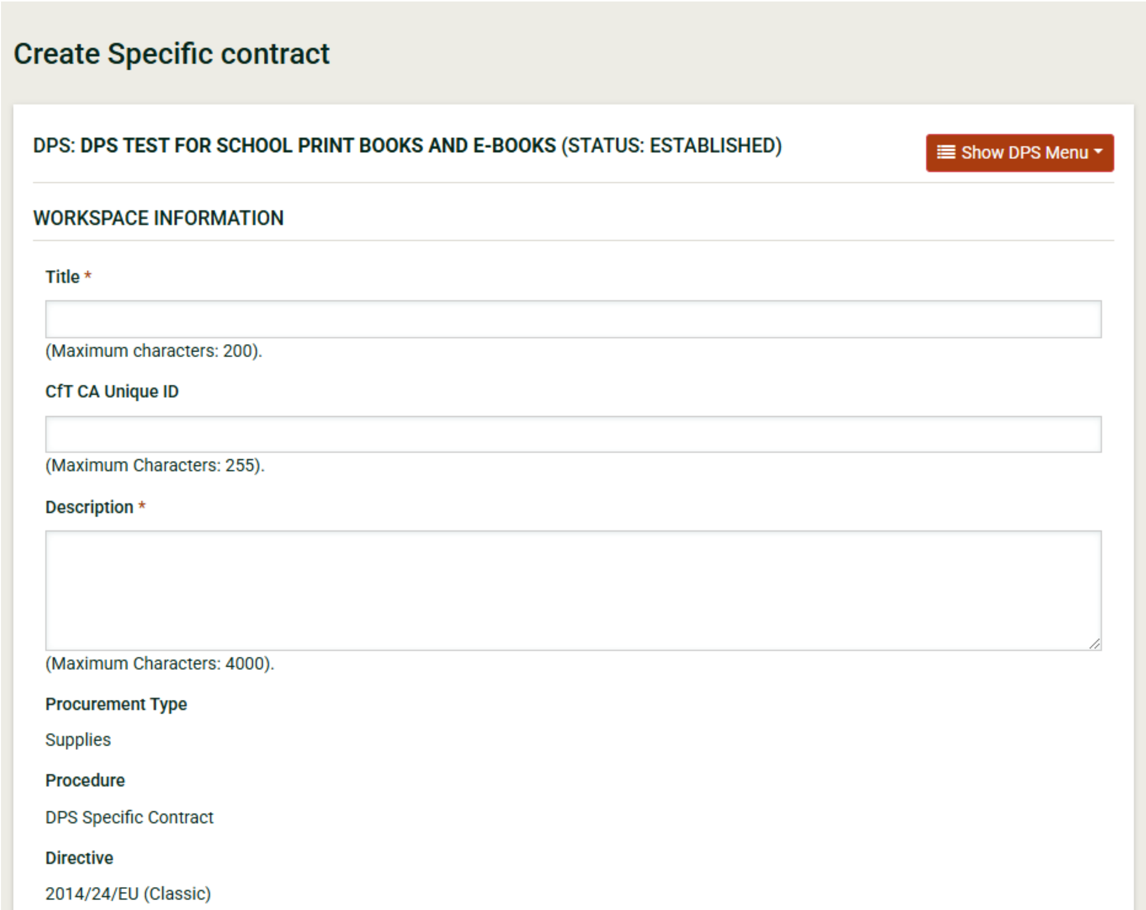

Figure 2.7

The following sections of the guide provide recommended text for schools to use when completing this form.

Users are required to complete all the fields as indicated below. The mandatory fields are marked with an asterisk (*). Some fields will be prepopulated and will not require any action. Those are indicated in the table below (grey background).

Field	**Description**	**Recommended texts for schools**
Title*	This is the title of the Mini-Competition.	Mini-Competition for the provision of schoolbooks to [School Name and Roll Number]. Example: Mini-Competition for the provision of schoolbooks to St. Mary's, Cork 12345A.

CfT CA Unique ID	Unique ID for the Mini-Competition.	Schools should make an ID for their Mini-Competition. The recommended format should be School initials + "SB" + year and month.
Description*	This provides further details on the Mini-Competition.	Example: [School Name and Roll Number] seeks Tenders for the provision of schoolbooks under the Department of Education's Post-Primary Schoolbook Scheme. The detailed specifications of requirements are outlined in Part C of this Stage 2 - mini-competition. **Note**: there is a limit of 4000 characters allowed. Special characters (e.g. &) will not be accepted.
Procurement Type	This field will be prepopulated. No action needed.	Supplies.
Procedure	This field will be prepopulated. No action needed.	DPS Specific Contract.
Directive	This field will be prepopulated. No action needed.	2014/24/EU (Classic).
CfT involves	This field will be prepopulated. No action needed.	A Public Contract.
CPV Codes	This field will be prepopulated. No action needed.	22815000-Notebooks. 22112000-Textbooks. 22100000-Printed books, brochures and leaflets. 22113000-Library books. 22110000-Printed books.
Inclusion of eAuctions*	An eAuction is an electronic facility where tenderers can bid in pricing for an item and increase their bids if they see other bidders' bids.	No.
NUTS Codes	This field will be prepopulated. No action needed.	IE.

Estimated value (EUR)	The estimated contract value, exclusive of VAT.	Insert estimated value of contract exclusive of VAT. Refer to "Pricing Schedule" to determine contract's estimated value. **Note**: Only numbers can be inserted here. No special characters will be accepted.
Time-limit for receipt of tenders or requests to participate	This is the date that tenders need to be submitted.	Date: 21 days after publication/invitation date. Time: 12h 00m.
Upload of documents within the clarifications*	Give tenderers and the contracting authority the ability to upload documents when sending and responding to clarifications.	Yes.
Allow Late Tenders	This allows prospective bidders to submit responses after the deadline.	No.
EU funding	Is the funding for this tender from the EU?	No.
Evaluation Mechanism	This is how you intend to evaluate the tenders. This field will be prepopulated. No action needed.	Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT).
Multiple tenders will be accepted	A tenderer can submit multiple proposals.	No.
Language of publication*	English.	EN.
Number of Openers*	The person who opens the tender bids.	One.

Once all fields have been completed, click "**Create CFT Workspace**" as seen in Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8

A pop-up window will appear (Fig. 2.9). Check inserted information. If all is accurate – click ok.

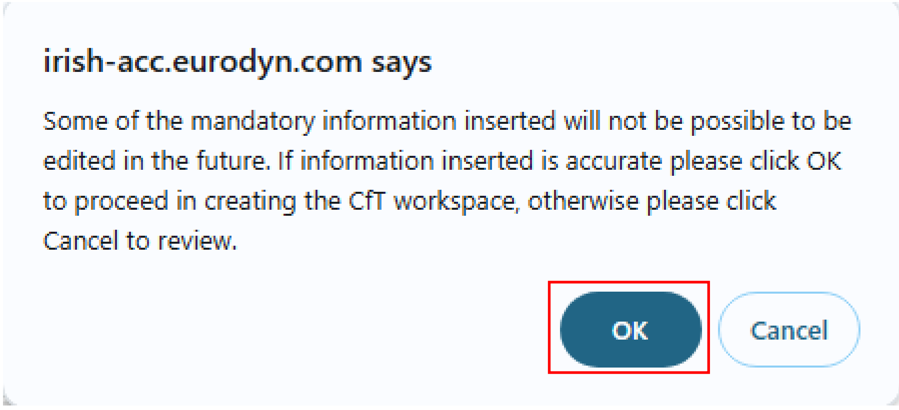

Figure 2.9

As shown in Figure 2.10, this will create a draft CfT.

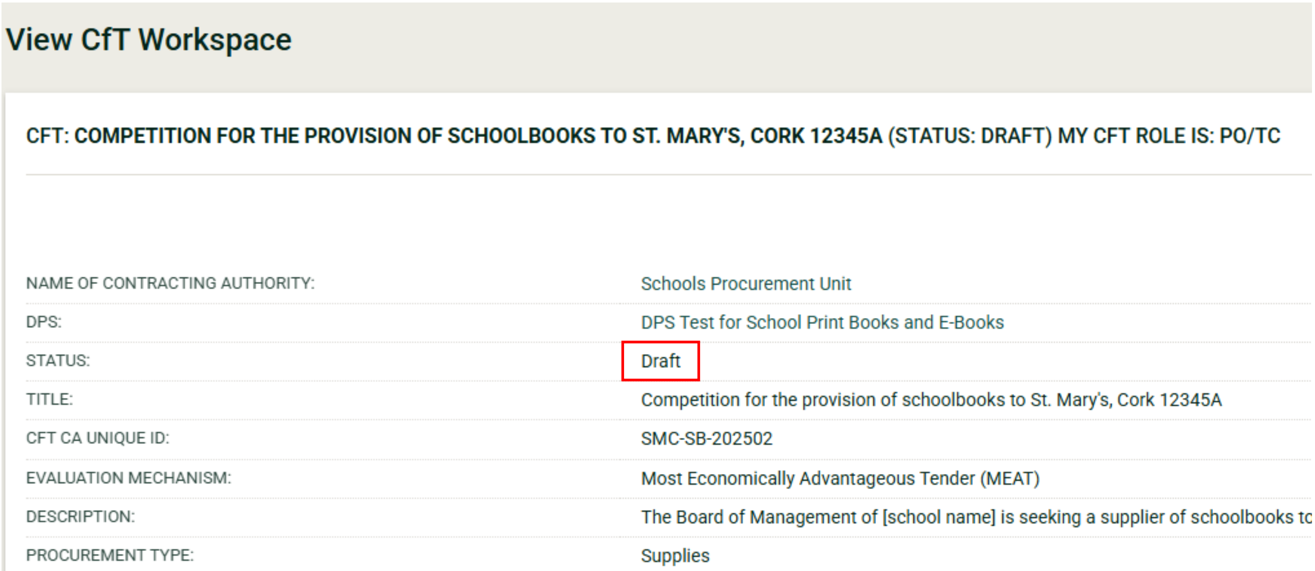

Figure 2.10

2. Task 2: Finalise CFT Information

As shown in Figure 2.11, click the “**Home**” button at the top of the page.

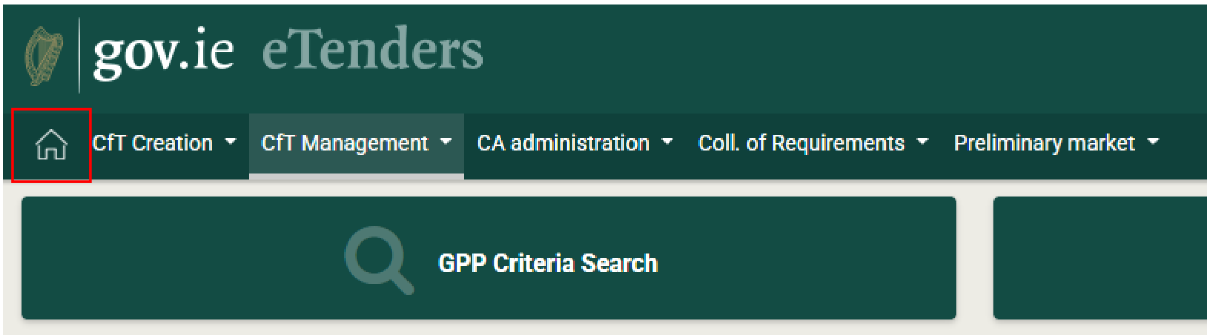

Figure 2.11

A list of tasks will appear similar to Figure 2.12. Locate the task “**Finalise CfT Core Information**” and click on it:

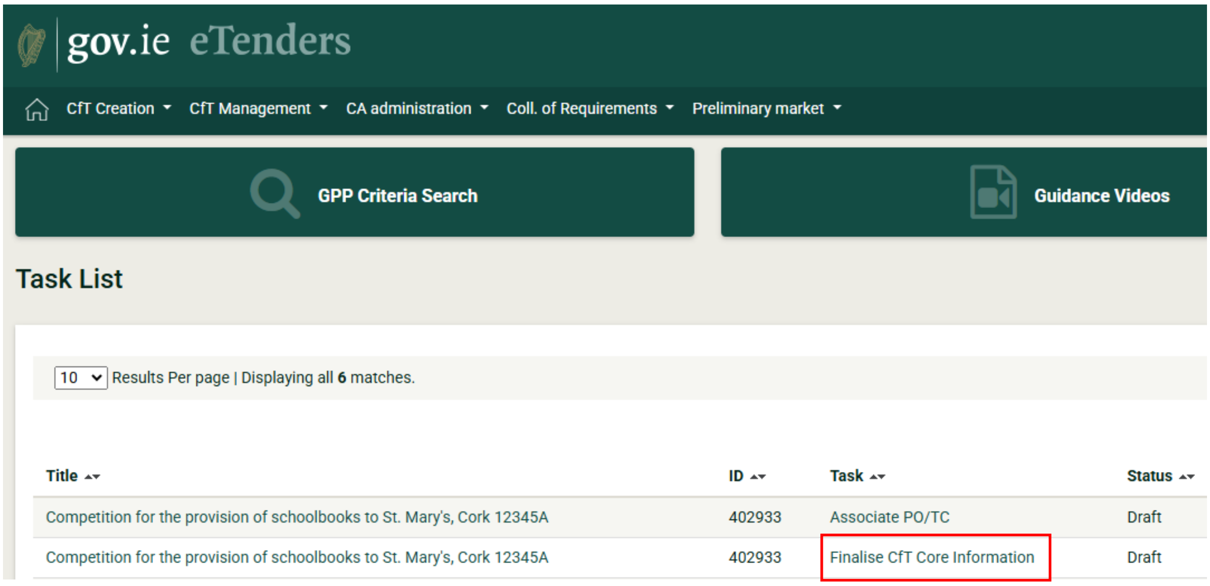

Figure 2.12

The CfT Workspace page will reappear in edit mode as shown in Figure 2.13:

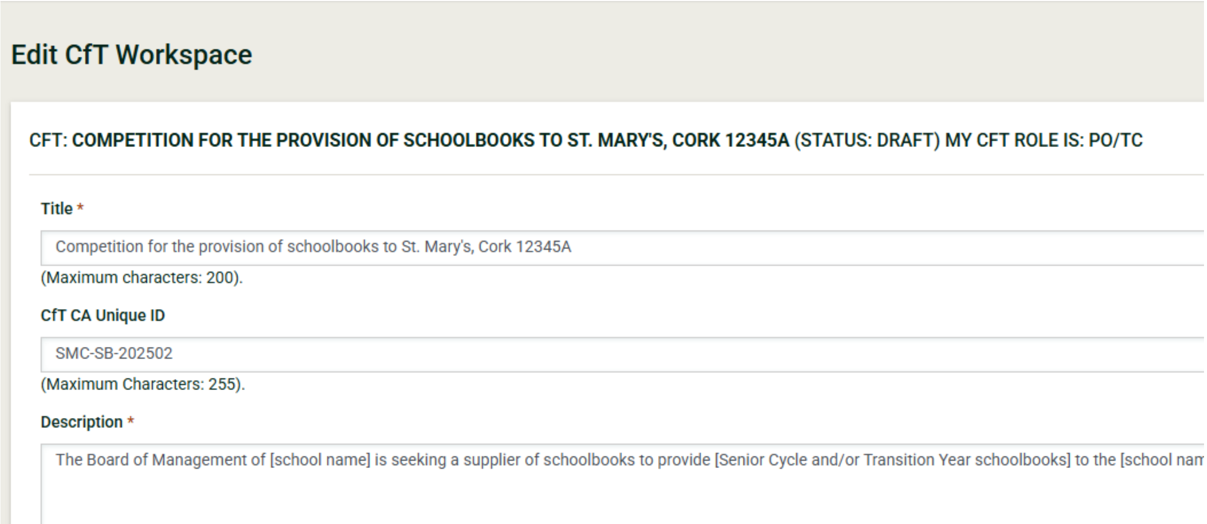

Figure 2.13

If all fields were inserted as per the table in Task 1.3, no other information will be left empty in this view.

Click “**Save Changes**” (Fig. 2.14)

Figure 2.14

When you click Save Changes a number of pop-ups will appear asking for confirmation, click OK on these to proceed. Fig. 2.15 and Fig 2.16.

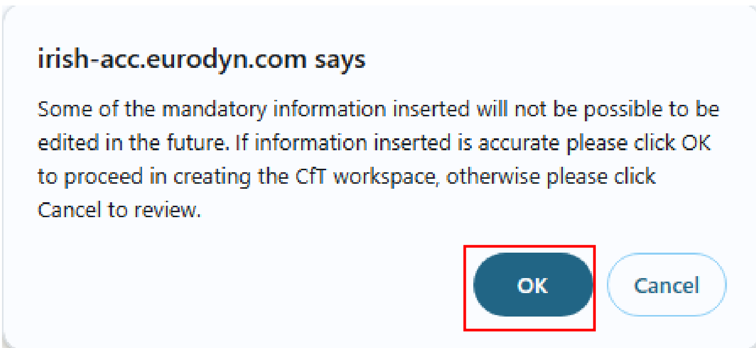

Figure 2.15

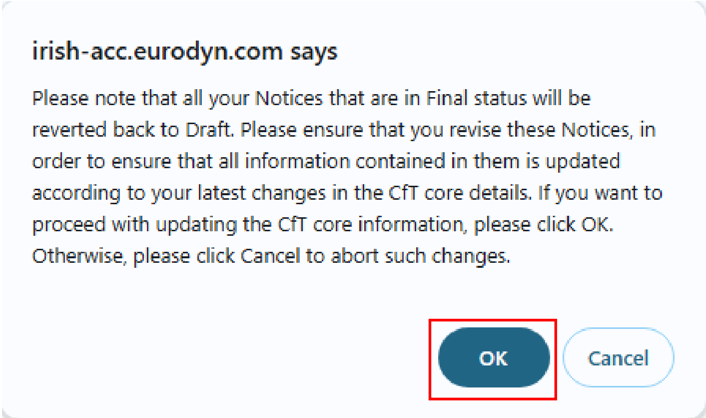

Figure 2.16

Note: If an error message comes up and you are unable to save changes, review all the fields and make sure information is inserted as per table in Task 1.3 above.

3. Task 3: Associating Contracting Authority Users

3.1 Adding Roles to your Tender

To continue in the procurement process, click the "**Home**" button (Fig. 2.17). This will take you to your "**Task List**".

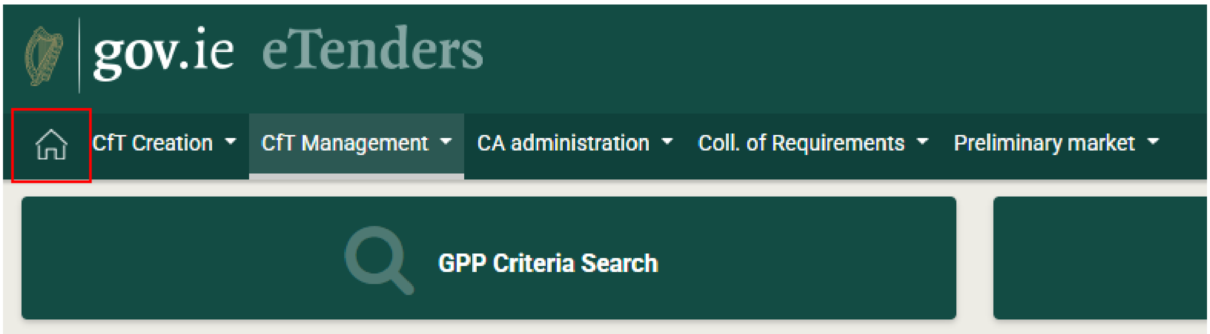

Figure 2.17

Find the task "**Associate PO/TC**" and click on it. (Fig. 2.18)

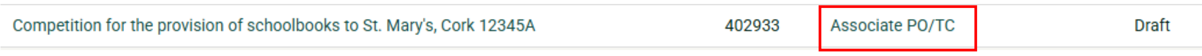

Figure 2.18

As can be seen in Figure 2.19, click on "**Role**" drop-down menu and select final option: "**PO/TC + PO/OS + PO/ESR Candidate**".

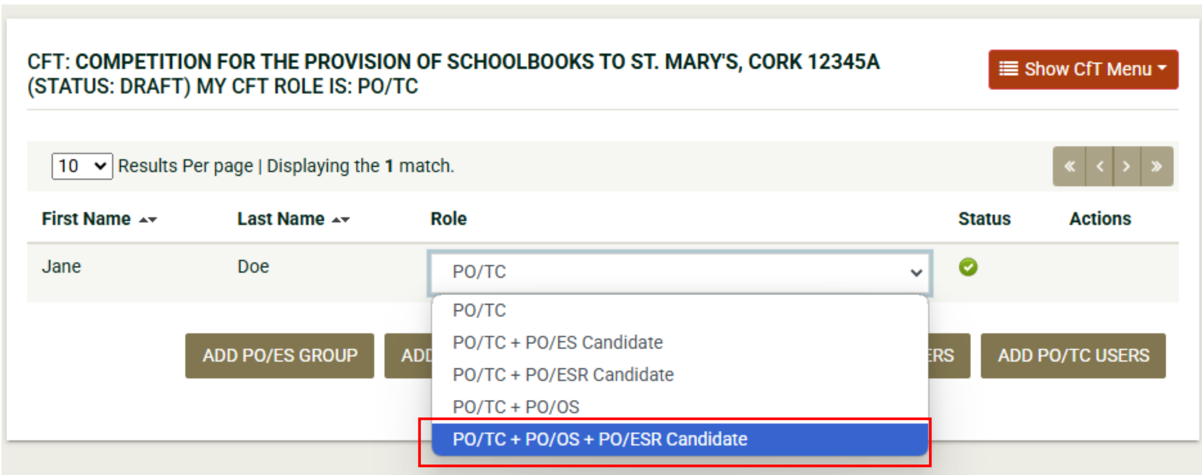

Figure 2.19

This will enable you to complete all roles for the Mini-Competition.

There is no need to save or click anything else on this page.

Click on the "**Home**" icon in the top left to return to your "**Task List**".

3.2 Accept Code of Conduct / No Conflict of Interest

On the "**Task List**" Click on "**Accept code of conduct**" as shown in Figure 2.20:

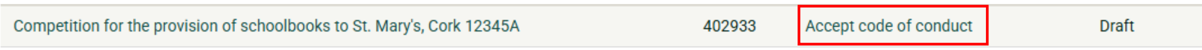

Figure 2.20

This will direct you to a new page "Candidate Evaluator". Click **"Accept"** and **"Save"** to proceed. (Figure 2.21)

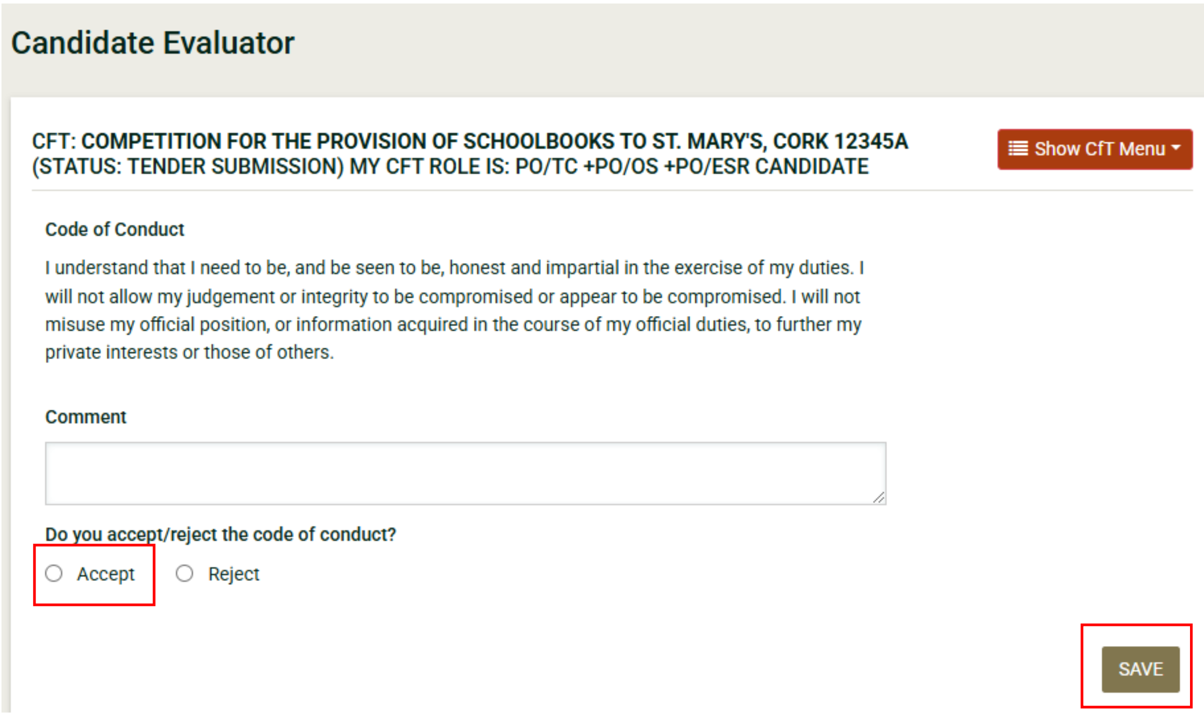

Figure 2.21

If the Code of Conduct was accidentally rejected, repeat the steps from Task 3.1 onwards.

Note: Task "**Associate PO/OS and PO/ES**" will still appear in your task list even after you accept the code of conduct. It will only change when you unlock your tender after the tender deadline has passed.

4. Task 4: Define Workflow

Click the Home button in the top left of the screen to return to your “**Task List**”:

Then select the “**Define Workflow**” task as can be seen in Figure 2.22:

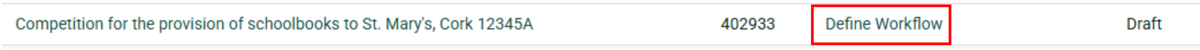

Figure 2.22

The platform allows users to define which of the phases of the competition will be carried out online or offline (outside the system).

By selecting this functionality, the user decides which of the procurement process steps will take place offline:

- Definition of the tender structure, and awarding criteria
- Tender submission and opening (this phase will be preset to “online”)
- Tender evaluation and assignment of scores

Phase	Description	Recommended for Schools
Notification	Define tender structure (and awarding criteria).	**Offline** Offline: The tender structure will be handled off eTenders.
Tendering	Submit & Open Tenders will be handled on eTenders. This will be preset to “online”. No action needed.	**Online** Online: Economic Operators will need to create and submit their tenders using electronic means.
Evaluation	Assign scores.	**Offline** Offline: Evaluating tenders and assessing scores will be handled off eTenders. The Evaluating Staff Representative (ESR) will be required to submit the results of the offline evaluation procedure, when this is finalised, to the system (Task: Add scores).

Note*:* Once you set the Notification phase as Offline, the system will automatically change Evaluation to Offline.

Select the recommended options from the dropdowns and click “**Define CfT Workflow**” as shown in Figure 2.23:

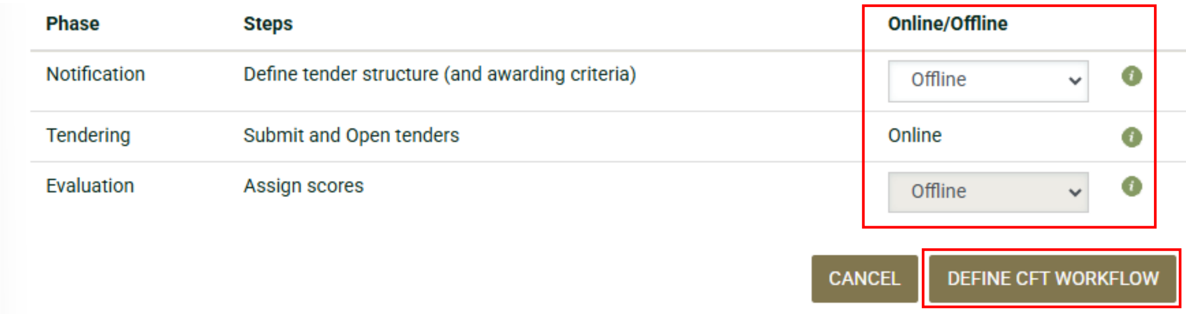

Figure 2.23

Note*:* Once workflow is defined, no changes to this section can be made. If “online” was chosen for notifications and/or evaluation, delete this draft CFT and restart the process from Task 1.

When you click “Define CFT Workflow” a pop-up will appear asking for confirmation, click OK to proceed. Fig 2.24.

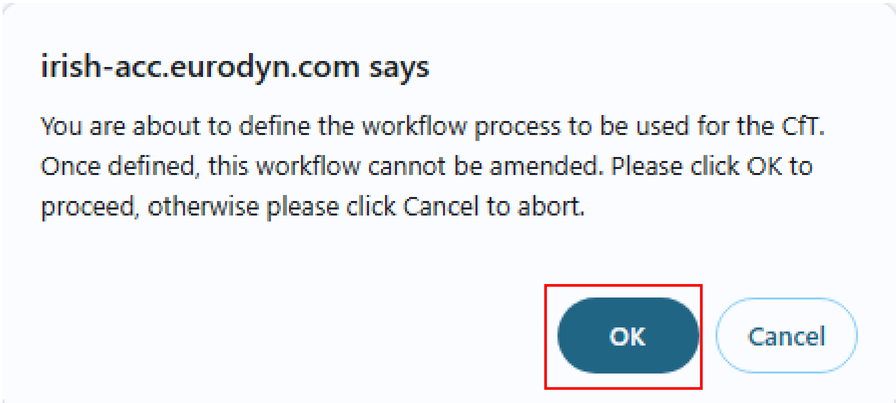

Fig. 2.24

5. Task 5: Send Invitations

Click the Home button in the top left of the screen to return to your "**Task List**" as shown in Figure 2.25.

Note: the task "Associate PO/OS and PO/ES" will remain on your task list until the tender deadline has passed and further steps have been completed.

Select the "**Send invitations**" task.

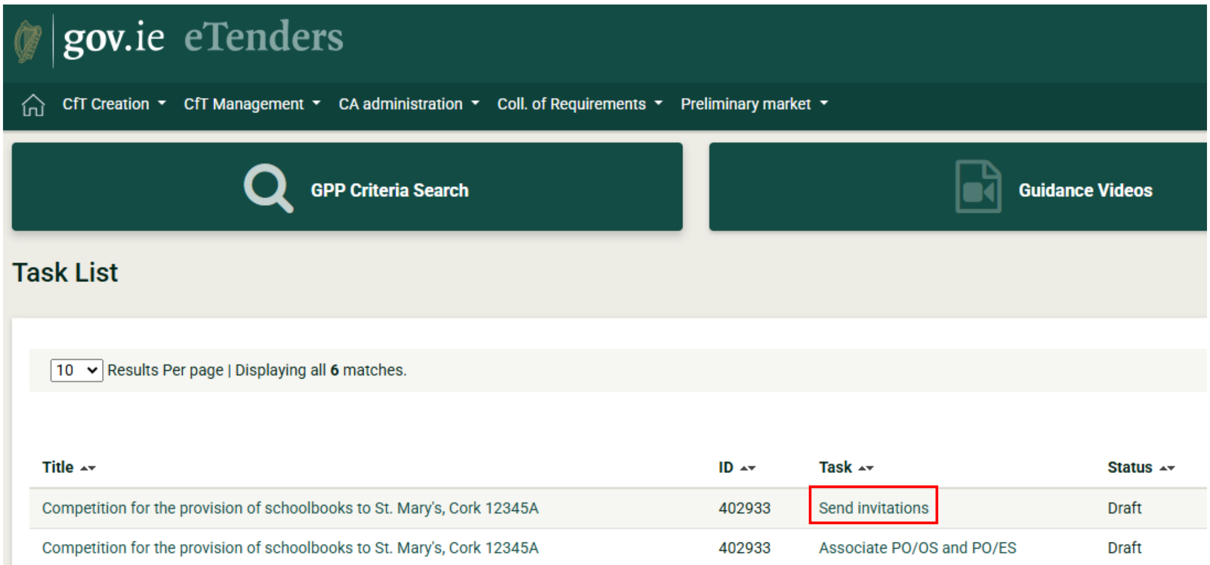

Figure 2.25

Note: If you cannot see a task "Send Invitations" after following these steps, it means that a supplier applied to be admitted to the DPS. Until this application is processed the DPS will be on hold and it will not be possible to send out invitations. Contact helpline at postprimaryschoolbooks@education.gov.ie for more details.

5.1 Add Tender Documents

Tender documents list school's requirements and determine rules under which the competition will be conducted. These will be available to DPS members invited to tender in Task 5.2 that follows.

In order to add tender documents, select the "**Tender Documents**" tab and then click on "**+ Add Contract Document**" button as can be seen in Figure 2.26.

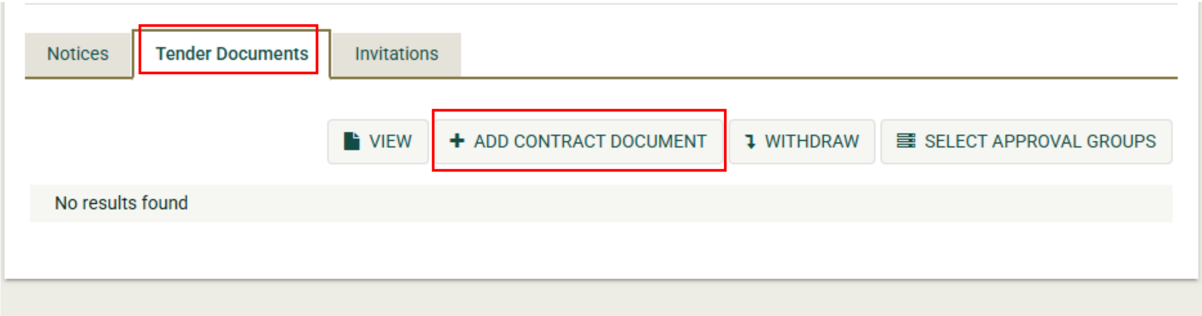

Figure 2.26

When adding a document, the following fields must be filled out:

Field	Description	Recommended response for schools
Title	This is the name of the document and will be shown on the notice when published.	Provide a clear name of each document uploaded. **Note**: all three documents need to be uploaded before proceeding to task 5.2. Example: 1.Call for Tenders – Schoolbooks – [School Name and Roll Number] 2.Tender Response Document – Schoolbooks – [School Name and Roll Number] 3.Pricing Schedule – [School Name and Roll Number]
Language	English.	English.
Description	This is **not** mandatory.	This can be left blank.
Attachment	Here you can add a document from Template Library on eTenders or from your local drive.	We recommend that you add the document from your local drive. Click on "**Choose File**" to select relevant document.
Status	Draft/ Final. Draft – if document is still in draft; may still require approval. Final – Final version.	**Select: "Final"** All approvals for these documents should be completed off eTenders and only a final version uploaded on eTender.

Note: Make sure that before you save the documents on eTenders, you choose "Final". Any documents saved during this step as "Draft" **will not be available** to DPS members after you send out invitation(s) to tender.

Click "**Save**" (Fig. 2.27)

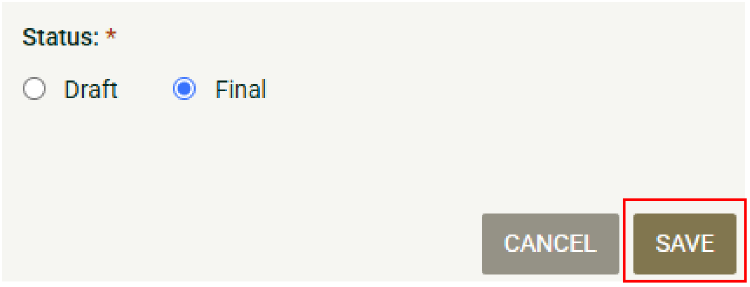

Fig. 2.27

When you click “Save” a pop-up window will appear asking for confirmation, click OK to proceed. Fig. 2.28

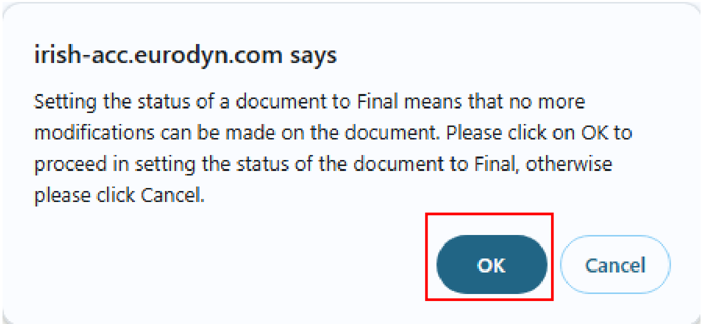

Figure 2.28

Continue to add remaining tender documents by clicking “+**Add Contract Document**” and following.the steps in Task 5.1.

Note: steps in “Task 5.1 Add Tender Documents” will have to be repeated for each tender document. **User needs to upload all three documents**: (1) a CFT (call for tender), (2) TRD (tender response document) and (3) a PS (booklist pricing sheet listing all books required).

Name	**Description**
CfT (Call for Tender)	A document outlining the tender request. It includes a draft contract.
TRD (Tender Response Document)	A document for potential tenderers to complete in response to a school’s CfT.
Pricing Schedule	A template file which schools should initially use to estimate the value of the contract. It should list all the schoolbooks required.

The above templates are available on https://www.spu.ie/post-primary-schools/

Note: Once the documents are uploaded, they cannot be deleted; if there are any changes required to the documents; contact helpline for guidance at postprimaryschoolbooks@education.gov.ie.

5.2 Invitations

This is where user will be able to send out invitations to DPS members registered for the same Lot that was selected when creating the contract in Task 1.2.

Select tab called "**Invitations**" and "**Create new Invitations**" as shown in Fig. 2.29

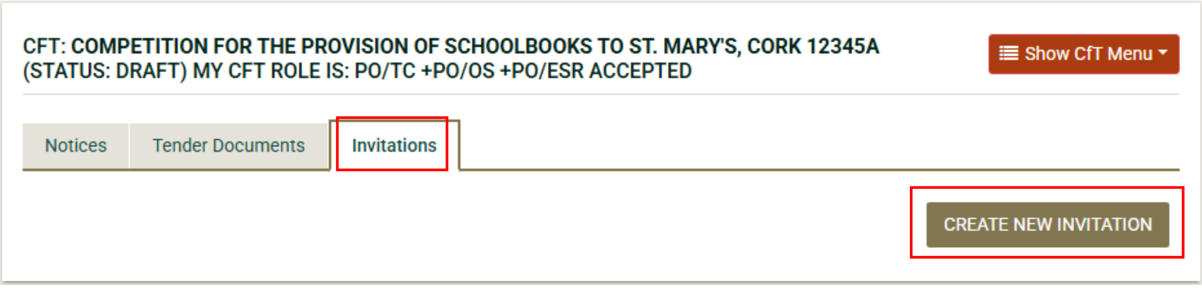

Fig. 2.29

A new page will open with more options. Fill in all the mandatory fields.

Field	Description	Recommended response for schools
Subject*	Subject line of the message sent to suppliers. This field is mandatory.	This field will be prepopulated. No action needed.
Body*	A body of a message sent to the suppliers. This field is mandatory.	Example: Dear Sir/Madam, As a DPS Member prequalified under Lot X, the Board of Management of [School Name and Roll Number] invites you to participate in a Mini-Competition for the provision of its schoolbook requirements. Full details are to be found in the tender documents which can be accessed on eTenders platform. With kind regards, [School Name and Roll Number].
Attachment	Any documents attached to the message.	No action needed. Tender documents can be accessed through eTenders platform,

		once DPS members are invited to the Mini-Competition.
Organisations*	A list of suppliers admitted to the DPS (DPS members) under the lot the user has chosen when creating the contract, will be visible here.	All the companies will be preselected. No action needed. **Important! Do not remove any of the companies!** All DPS members admitted to that specific Lot are entitled to take part in your Mini-Competition.
Request for clarification*	This field is looking for a time and date to be inserted for the receipt of clarifications from potential Tenderers. It should be used to allow potential tenderers to clarify any aspect of the competition that they are unsure of. The closing date for clarifications is normally 6 days before the tender submission date to allow the contracting authority to respond to the clarifications in time before tenders are submitted.	Date: 7 days before the tender deadline Time: 12h 00m.
Deadline for tender submission*	A tender deadline chosen in Task 1.3 earlier will be repeated here.	This field will be prepopulated. No action needed.

Click “**Send invitation**” at the bottom.

When you click “Send invitation” a pop-up window will appear asking for confirmation. If all suppliers were selected under “Organisation” field, and all other mandatory fields are fille out as recommended, click OK to proceed. Fig. 2.30

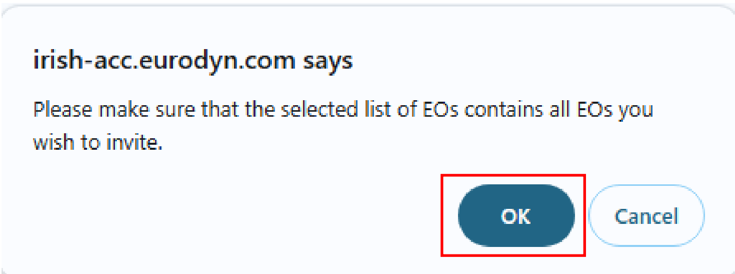

Figure 2.30

Note: when invitations are sent, under the tab “Invitations” you will be able to see the subject, body of the message; suppliers invited to tender, as well as the date for clarification and tender deadline.

The invitations are now sent, and DPS members can begin to ask queries, or enter tender bids.