



How to Use the eTenders Messaging System

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1. Introduction

This guide is designed to assist primary and post-primary school leaders with using the eTenders messaging system to:

- access and read messages with queries received* from Economic Operators (EOs), i.e. suppliers or service providers;
- respond messages with queries received* by broadcasting a message to all EOs who have expressed interest in your tender;
- compose and broadcast a message to all EOs who have expressed interest in your tender with updates on your competition, where applicable;
- compose and send a query to an individual EO during the evaluation process.

***Please note: Queries can be received from the tender publication date until the queries deadline as stated in your CFT (Call for Tender) document and CfT Workspace (eTenders). All queries must be received and responded to through the eTenders messaging facility. Queries must be responded to within 1 working day, and no later than 5 calendar days (for tenders below threshold) or 6 calendar days (for tenders above threshold) before the tender deadline. The school's representative who is responsible for the tender publication must be available during this period to answer any queries that may be received.**

You can access eTenders at www.etenders.gov.ie.

2. Receiving Queries through eTenders

Whenever an Economic Operator (EO), i.e. supplier or service provider, sends a message with a query to the Contracting Authority (CA), i.e. the school, the school's representative who published that specific competition will receive an email notification similar to the one shown in Figure 1.

The email will include:

- Name of Economic Operator
- Number of your competition
- Title of your competition
- A direct link to the messaging page (login is required)

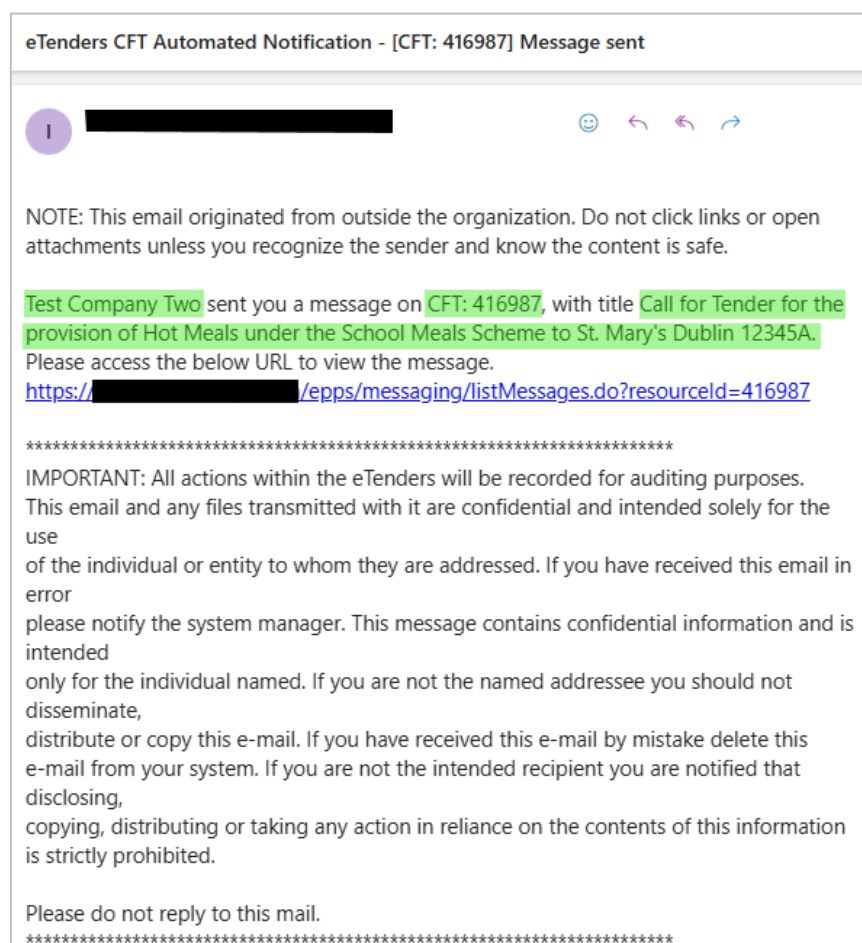


Figure 1

3. Accessing Received Messages on eTenders

Click on the link provided in the email notification and log into your eTenders account linked to your tender competition. Once logged in, you will be taken to the messaging page, where you will be able to see all messages received, as the example shown in Figure 2.

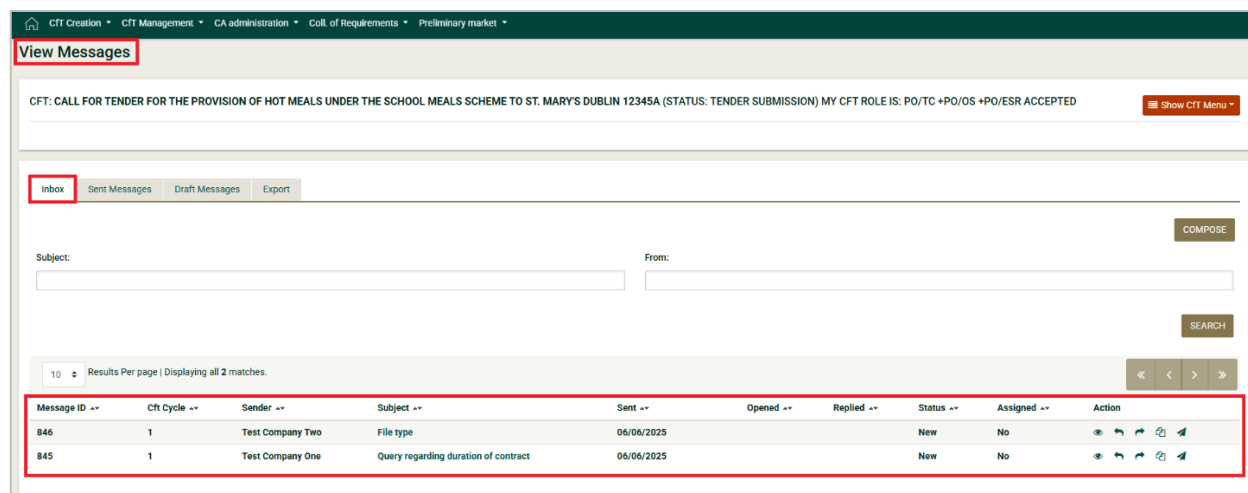


Figure 2

Alternatively, access www.etenders.gov.ie and log into your eTenders account linked to your tender competition.

Once logged in, you will see your task list. Click on the title of your competition, as the example shown in Figure 3.

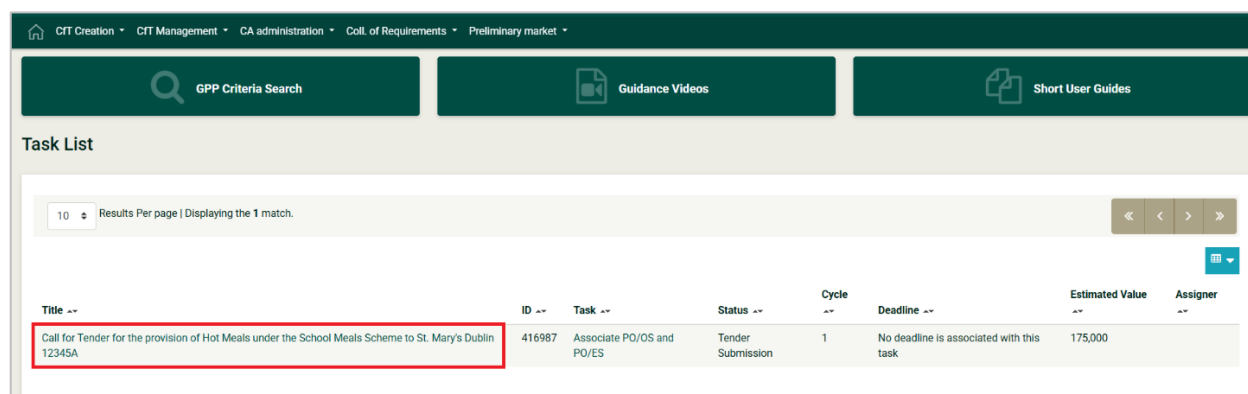


Figure 3

This will open your '**Cft Workspace**' with details of the tender. On this page, click on the red button on the right hand-side called '**Show Cft Menu**', scroll down and select the option '**Messaging**' as the example shown in Figure 4.

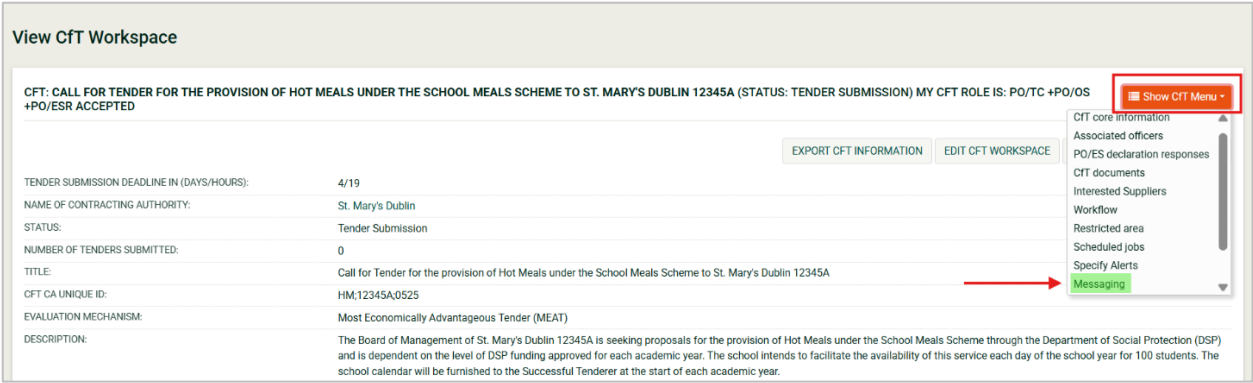


Figure 4

This will open the messaging page as in Figure 2 above. Click on the 'Subject' of the message to view the details, as example shown in Figure 5. Note that in this example, there are 2 unread messages (Status = New, and all information is in bold). For the purposes of this guide, the first message will be replied.

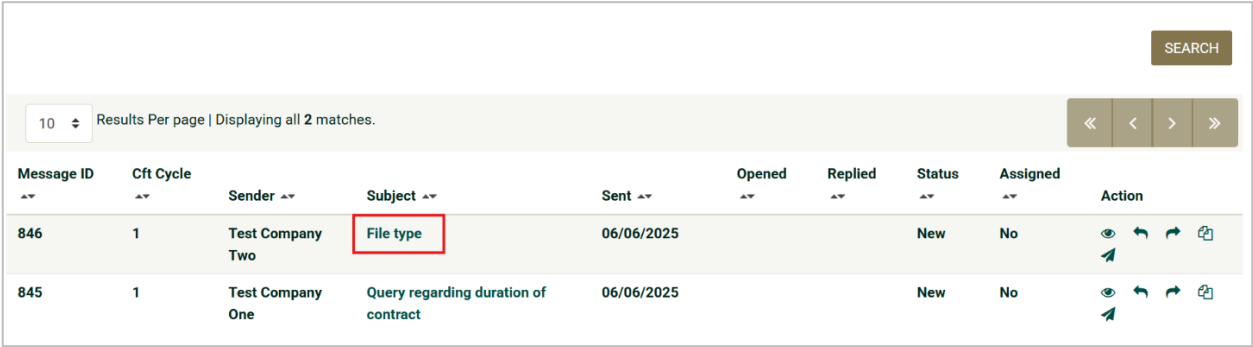


Figure 5

In the message page, scroll down if needed until you see the 'BODY' of the message, as example shown in Figure 6. Note that the 'STATUS' has now changed to 'Read'.

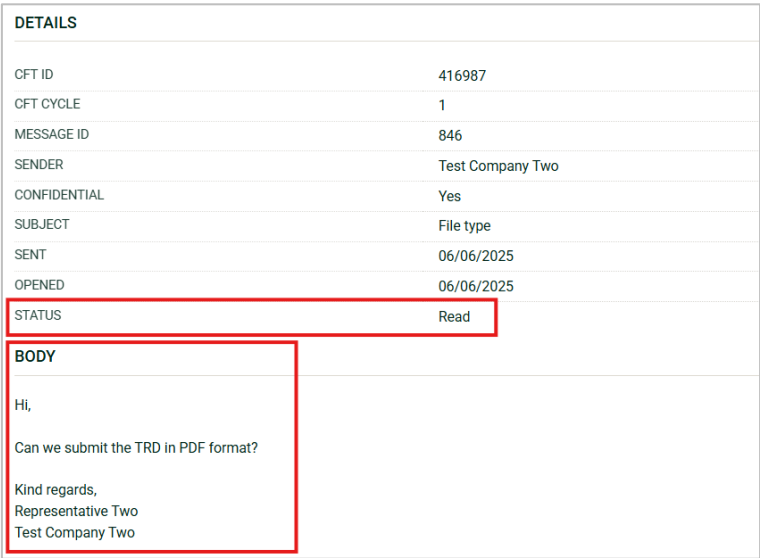


Figure 6

4. Replying to Messages on eTenders

In the message page, you can scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on **‘REPLY’**, as shown in Figure 7.

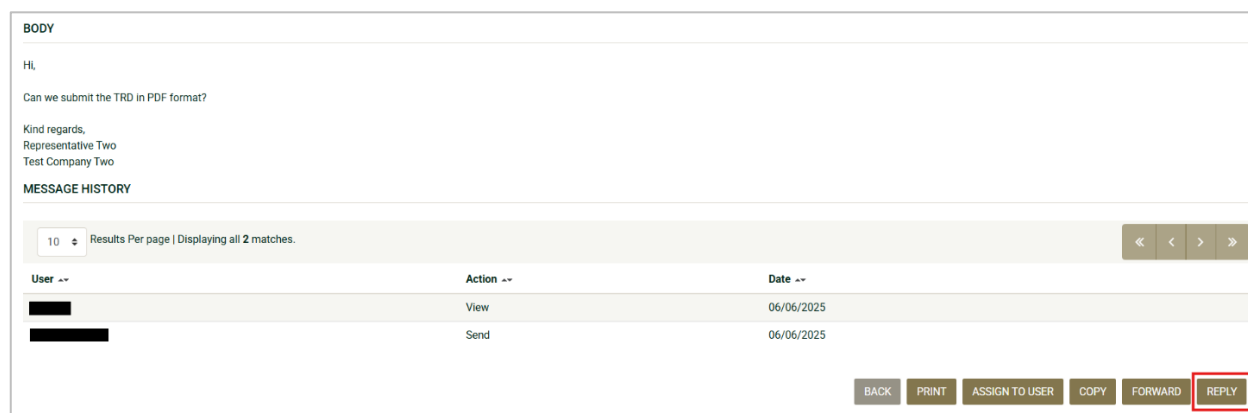


Figure 7

Please note: If a company seeks clarification on any aspect of the competition, then all companies that have expressed interest in or were invited to your competition are entitled to receive the same information. In such cases, question and answer must be broadcast to all in an anonymous manner, i.e. any information that could identify the company asking the question should be removed from the message that will be sent to all companies. See below for more details.

Once you click on **‘REPLY’**, a new page called ‘Create Message’ will open. Fill in and/or edit the fields in this page as follows:

Field	Description	Recommended response for Schools
Action*	<i>This field will be pre-populated. No action needed.</i>	<i>Reply</i>
Subject*	Subject of the message. This field will be pre-populated but may be edited if needed.	Note: If there is any detail in the subject of the message that could identify the company asking the question, any such detail must be edited/deleted before broadcasting the Q&A message.
Body*	Body of the message. This field will be pre-populated with the initial message sent by the company.	When adding the response, it is recommended to use CFT text rather than introducing new words/information. Note: If there is any detail in the original body of the message that could identify the company asking the question, any such detail must be edited/deleted before broadcasting the Q&A message.

Attachment 1	Optional fields. Documents may be attached to the message.	<i>It is recommended not to attach any files to the message. If there is a need to amend the original tender documents, contact the SPU before proceeding.</i>
Attachment 2		
Confidential*	Select 'Yes' or 'No'. <i>When a sender marks information as confidential, it suggests that they prefer it not to be shared without their permission.</i>	Select 'Yes' if the school wishes to flag the information provided as confidential. Otherwise, select 'No'.
Broadcast*	Select 'Yes' or 'No'.	Select 'Yes' if the message includes information that is of relevance to all EOs who have expressed interest in your competition. Otherwise, select 'No'.
Recipients*	Companies that will receive the message.	If selecting 'Yes' for the 'Broadcast' field, this field will be automatically updated with all EOs who have expressed interest in the competition. <i>If selecting 'No' for the 'Broadcast' field, the default recipient is the EO who have asked the question; however, recipient list can be edited, if required, by locating and selecting the appropriate recipient(s) through the search icon on the right-hand side.</i>

In Figure 8 below you can see the page in its default/original format. **Note that some of the information must be edited/deleted if broadcasting the question and answer, so the company and its representative cannot be identified.**

Create Message

CREATE MESSAGE

Action: *

Reply

Subject: *

RE: File type

Body: *

On 06/06/2025 Test Company Two wrote:

Hi,

Can we submit the TRD in PDF format?

Kind regards

Representative Two

Test Company Two

Figure 8

Now see an example of the edited and anonymised Q&A, including reference to the CFT in the response, in Figure 9.

The screenshot shows a 'CREATE MESSAGE' form. It has fields for 'Action: *' (set to 'Reply'), 'Subject: *' (set to 'RE: File type'), and 'Body: *'. The 'Body' field contains a 'Question:' section with the text 'Can we submit the TRD in PDF format?' and an 'Answer:' section with the text 'As per CFT Appendix 1 (b):' followed by a quote: 'All Tenders submitted in soft copy must be compiled such that they can be read immediately using Microsoft File Formats Word and Excel and / or PDF readers.' The 'Question' and 'Answer' sections are highlighted with red boxes.

Figure 9

After finalising the body of the message, scroll down to the bottom of the page, select the appropriate settings for the fields '**Confidential**' and '**Broadcast**', as per guidance in the table above, then click on '**SEND**', as shown in the example in Figure 10.

The screenshot shows the bottom of the 'CREATE MESSAGE' form. It includes 'Confidential: *' (set to 'Yes'), 'Broadcast: *' (set to 'No'), and 'Recipients: *' (set to 'Test Company Two'). The 'SEND' button is highlighted with a red box. The 'Confidential' and 'Broadcast' settings are also highlighted with a red box.

Figure 10

A pop-up similar to the one shown in Figure 11 will appear. Click '**OK**' to proceed.

The screenshot shows a confirmation pop-up dialog with the text 'Are you sure that you want to send this message?' and two buttons: 'OK' and 'Cancel'.

Figure 11

You will then see a notification that your message was successfully sent, as shown in Figure 12.

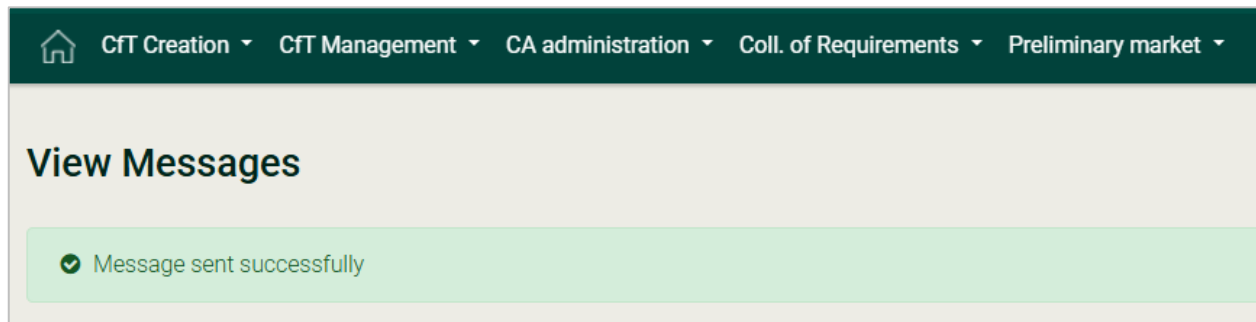


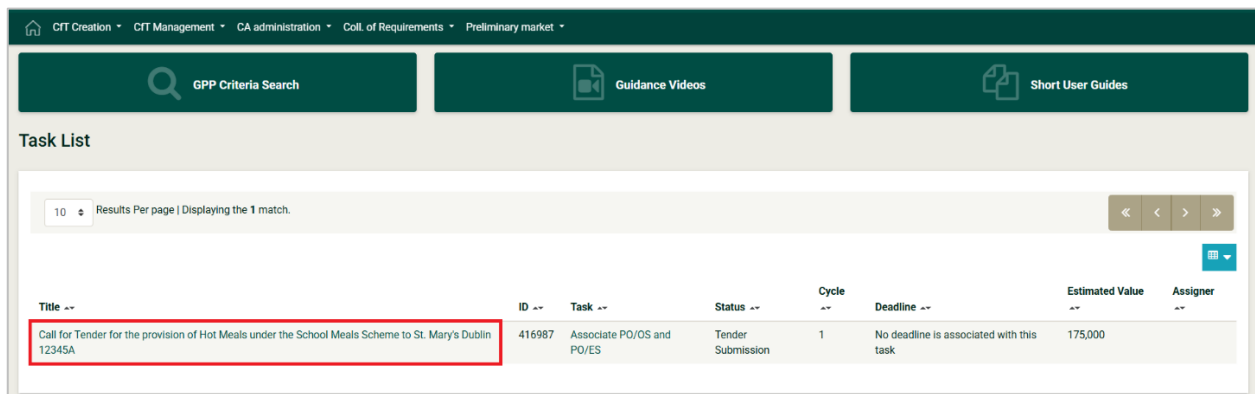
Figure 12

5. Composing and Broadcasting Messages on eTenders

If you need to compose and broadcast a message to all Economic Operators (EOs) who have expressed interest in your tender, for example to inform them that a piece of information was amended in your CFT and a new file was uploaded in your tender documents, you can follow the steps below.

Please note that you will only be able to compose and broadcast a message on eTenders from the moment you have at least one EO who has expressed interest in your Call for Tender. If there are no expressions of interest made to your competition yet, this means that there is no audience to broadcast a message to.

Access www.etenders.gov.ie and log into your eTenders account, linked to your tender competition. Once logged in, you will see your task list. Click on the title of your competition, as shown in Figure 13.

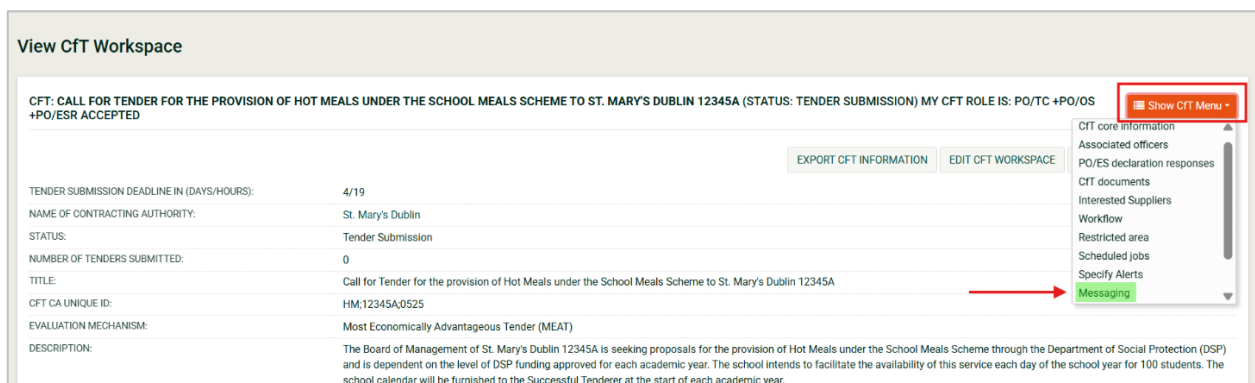


The screenshot shows the 'Task List' interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'CFT Creation', 'CFT Management', 'CA administration', 'Coll. of Requirements', and 'Preliminary market'. Below these are three main buttons: 'GPP Criteria Search', 'Guidance Videos', and 'Short User Guides'. The 'Task List' section shows a table with one entry highlighted by a red box. The table has columns for Title, ID, Task, Status, Cycle, Deadline, Estimated Value, and Assigner.

Title	ID	Task	Status	Cycle	Deadline	Estimated Value	Assigner
Call for Tender for the provision of Hot Meals under the School Meals Scheme to St. Mary's Dublin 12345A	416987	Associate PO/OS and PO/ES	Tender Submission	1	No deadline is associated with this task	175,000	

Figure 13

This will open your 'Cft Workspace' with details of the tender. On this page, click on the red button on the right hand-side called 'Show Cft Menu', scroll down and select the option 'Messaging' as shown in Figure 14.



The screenshot shows the 'View Cft Workspace' page. At the top, it displays the tender title: 'CFT: CALL FOR TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF HOT MEALS UNDER THE SCHOOL MEALS SCHEME TO ST. MARY'S DUBLIN 12345A (STATUS: TENDER SUBMISSION) MY CFT ROLE IS: PO/TC +PO/OS +PO/ESR ACCEPTED'. Below this, there are buttons for 'EXPORT CFT INFORMATION' and 'EDIT CFT WORKSPACE'. On the right side, there is a red button labeled 'Show Cft Menu'. A dropdown menu is open, showing various options: 'CFT core information', 'Associated officers', 'PO/ES declaration responses', 'CFT documents', 'Interested Suppliers', 'Workflow', 'Restricted area', 'Scheduled jobs', 'Specify Alerts', and 'Messaging'. A red arrow points to the 'Messaging' option.

Figure 14

This will open the messaging page. Click on 'COMPOSE' to create a new message, as seen in Figure 15.

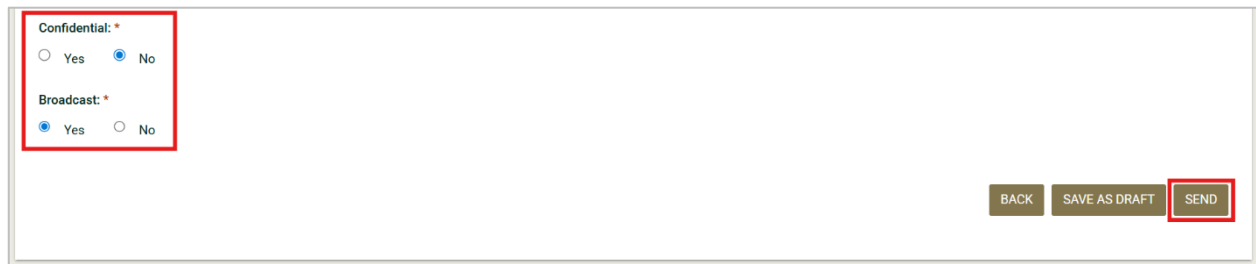
Figure 15

A new page called '**Create Message**' will open. Fill in and/or edit the fields as follows:

Field	Description	Recommended response for Schools
Subject*	Subject of the message.	Type the subject of your query.
Body*	Body of the message.	Type your query.
Attachment 1	Optional fields. Documents may be attached to the message.	<i>It is recommended not to attach any files to the message being broadcast. If there is a need to amend the original tender documents, contact the SPU before proceeding.</i>
Attachment 2		
Confidential*	Select 'Yes' or 'No'. <i>When a sender marks information as confidential, it suggests that they prefer it not to be shared without their permission.</i>	Select 'Yes' if the school wishes to flag the information provided as confidential. Otherwise, select 'No'.
Broadcast*	Select 'Yes' or 'No'.	Yes
Recipients*	<i>Companies that will receive the message.</i>	<i>This field will only appear if you set 'No' to 'Broadcast'. In this case, you must select the appropriate recipient(s) through the search icon on the right-hand side.</i>

Note: If you are composing a message to answer a query that one of the companies asked, make sure **not to** include any detail that could identify the company.

After filling in/editing all field as necessary, click '**SEND**' at the bottom of the page, as shown in the example in Figure 16.



Confidential: *

☐ Yes ☒ No

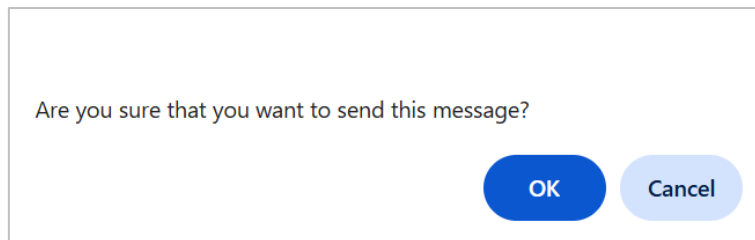
Broadcast: *

☒ Yes ☐ No

BACK SAVE AS DRAFT SEND

Figure 16

A pop-up similar to the one shown in Figure 17 will appear. Click '**OK**' to proceed.

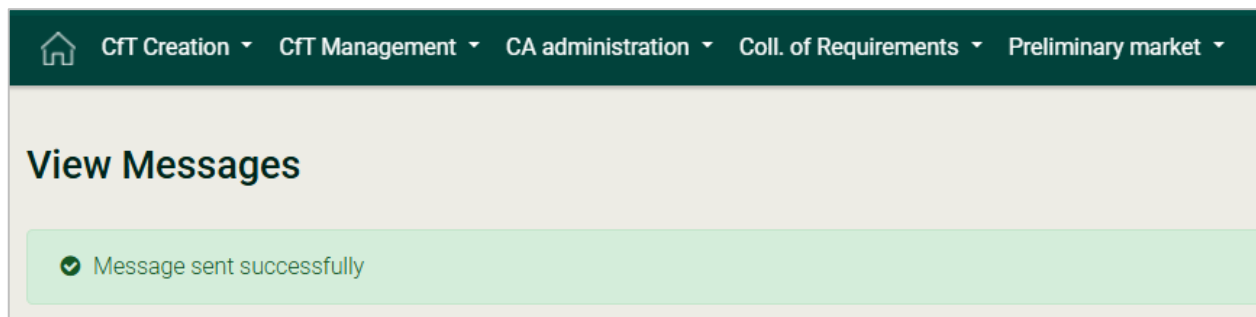


Are you sure that you want to send this message?

OK Cancel

Figure 17

You will then see a notification that your message was successfully sent, as shown in Figure 18.



Home CfT Creation CfT Management CA administration Coll. of Requirements Preliminary market

View Messages

Message sent successfully

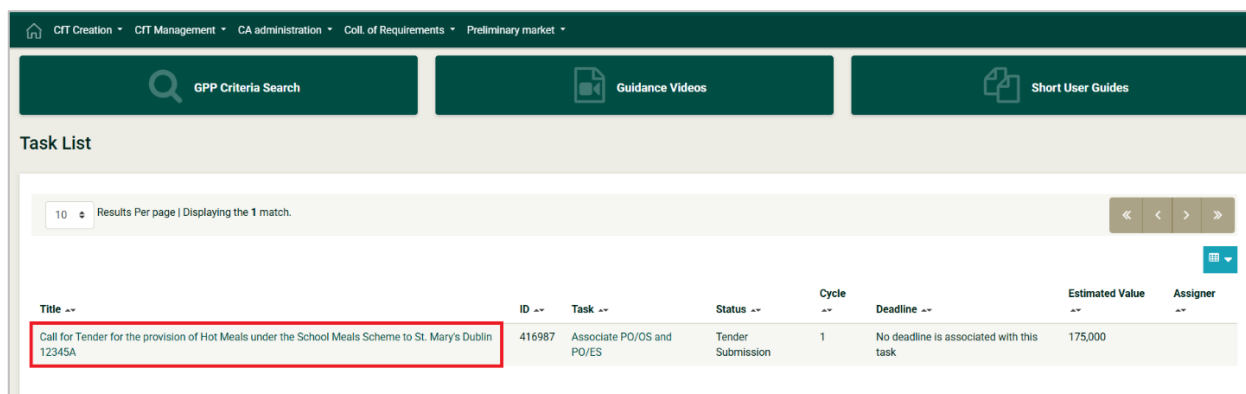
Figure 18

6. Composing and Sending Messages on eTenders

Once the tender deadline has passed and the tender submissions are being evaluated, the Contracting Authority may need to seek clarification in relation to some information submitted by tenderers.

If you need to compose and send a message with a request for clarification to a specific tenderer, you can follow the steps below.

Access www.etenders.gov.ie and log into your eTenders account, linked to your tender competition. Once logged in, you will see your task list. Click on the title of your competition, as shown in Figure 19.

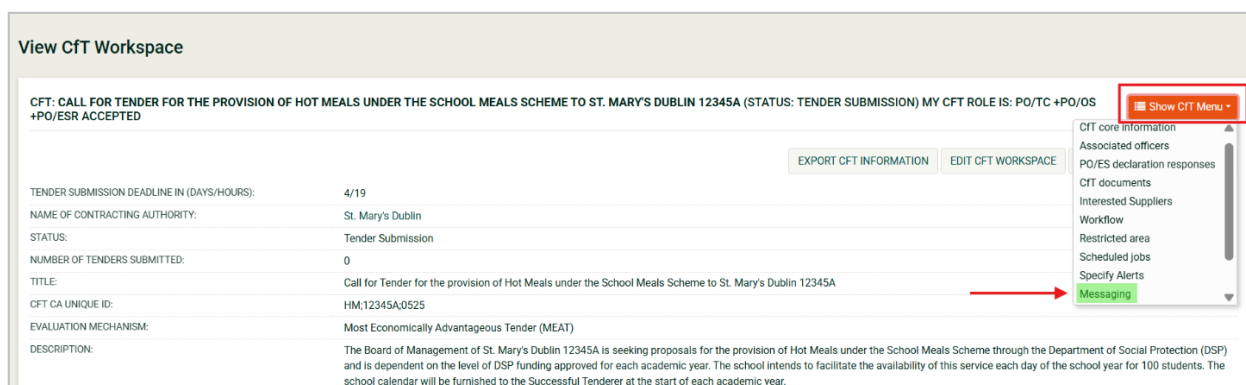


The screenshot shows the 'Task List' interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'CFT Creation', 'CFT Management', 'CA administration', 'Coll. of Requirements', and 'Preliminary market'. Below these are three main buttons: 'GPP Criteria Search', 'Guidance Videos', and 'Short User Guides'. The 'Task List' section shows a table with one entry highlighted by a red box. The table has columns for Title, ID, Task, Status, Cycle, Deadline, Estimated Value, and Assigner.

Title	ID	Task	Status	Cycle	Deadline	Estimated Value	Assigner
Call for Tender for the provision of Hot Meals under the School Meals Scheme to St. Mary's Dublin 12345A	416987	Associate PO/OS and PO/ES	Tender Submission	1	No deadline is associated with this task	175,000	

Figure 19

This will open your '**Cft Workspace**' with details of the tender. On this page, click on the red button on the right hand-side called '**Show Cft Menu**', scroll down and select the option '**Messaging**' as shown in Figure 20.



The screenshot shows the 'View Cft Workspace' page. It displays details for the tender 'CALL FOR TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF HOT MEALS UNDER THE SCHOOL MEALS SCHEME TO ST. MARY'S DUBLIN 12345A (STATUS: TENDER SUBMISSION) MY CFT ROLE IS: PO/TC +PO/OS +PO/ESR ACCEPTED'. A red box highlights the 'Show Cft Menu' button in the top right corner. A dropdown menu is open, showing options like 'CFT core information', 'Associated officers', 'PO/ES declaration responses', 'CFT documents', 'Interested Suppliers', 'Workflow', 'Restricted area', 'Scheduled jobs', 'Specify Alerts', and 'Messaging'. A red arrow points to the 'Messaging' option.

Field	Value
TENDER SUBMISSION DEADLINE IN (DAYS/HOURS):	4/19
NAME OF CONTRACTING AUTHORITY:	St. Mary's Dublin
STATUS:	Tender Submission
NUMBER OF TENDERS SUBMITTED:	0
TITLE:	Call for Tender for the provision of Hot Meals under the School Meals Scheme to St. Mary's Dublin 12345A
CFT CA UNIQUE ID:	HM:12345A/0525
EVALUATION MECHANISM:	Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT)
DESCRIPTION:	The Board of Management of St. Mary's Dublin 12345A is seeking proposals for the provision of Hot Meals under the School Meals Scheme through the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and is dependent on the level of DSP funding approved for each academic year. The school intends to facilitate the availability of this service each day of the school year for 100 students. The school calendar will be furnished to the Successful Tenderer at the start of each academic year.

Figure 20

This will open the messaging page. Click on '**COMPOSE**' to create a new message, as seen in Figure 21.

Figure 21

A new page called **'Create Message'** will open. Fill in and/or edit the fields as follows:

Field	Description	Recommended response for Schools
Subject*	Subject of the message.	Type the subject of your query.
Body*	Body of the message.	Type your query.
Attachment 1	Optional fields. Documents may be attached to the message.	Attach documents, if needed. For example, a screenshot that will help the tenderer understand your query better.
Attachment 2		
Confidential*	Select 'Yes' or 'No'. <i>When a sender marks information as confidential, it suggests that they prefer it not to be shared without their permission.</i>	Select 'Yes' if the school wishes to flag the information provided as confidential. Otherwise, select 'No'.
Broadcast*	Select 'Yes' or 'No'.	No
Recipients*	Company that will receive the message.	This field will only appear once you set 'No' to 'Broadcast'. You must select the appropriate recipient through the search icon on the right-hand side.

When clicking on the search icon (1), a pop-up (2) will appear for you to select the appropriate recipient of the message by ticking the relevant box (3), as shown in Figure 22.

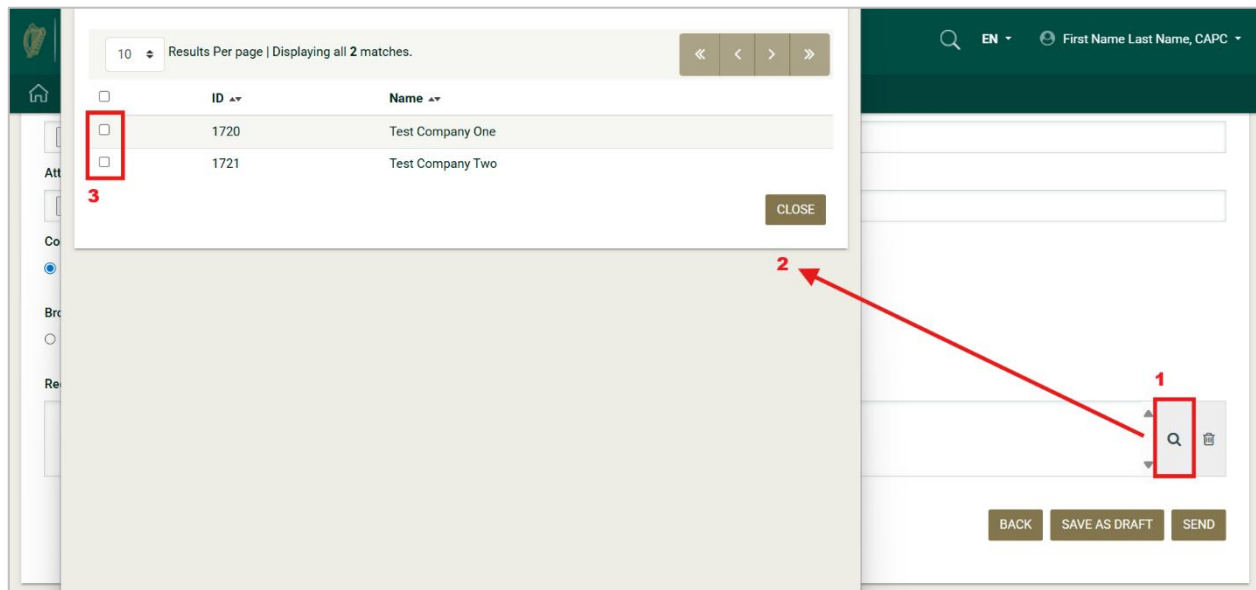


Figure 22

After selecting the appropriate recipient, click on **'SELECT'**, as shown in the example in Figure 23.

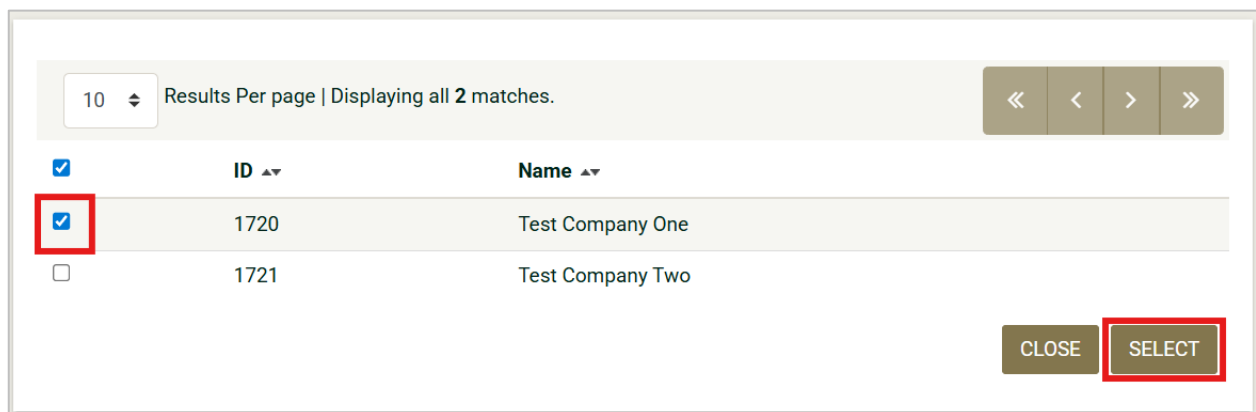


Figure 23

After filling in/editing all field as necessary, click **'SEND'** at the bottom of the page, as seen in the example in Figure 24.



Figure 24

A pop-up similar to the one shown in Figure 26 will appear. Click '**OK**' to proceed.

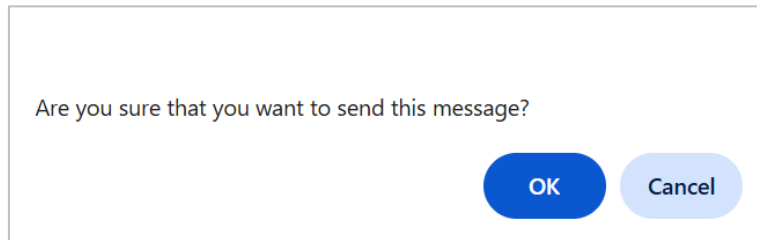


Figure 25

You will then see a notification that your message was successfully sent, as shown in Figure 27.

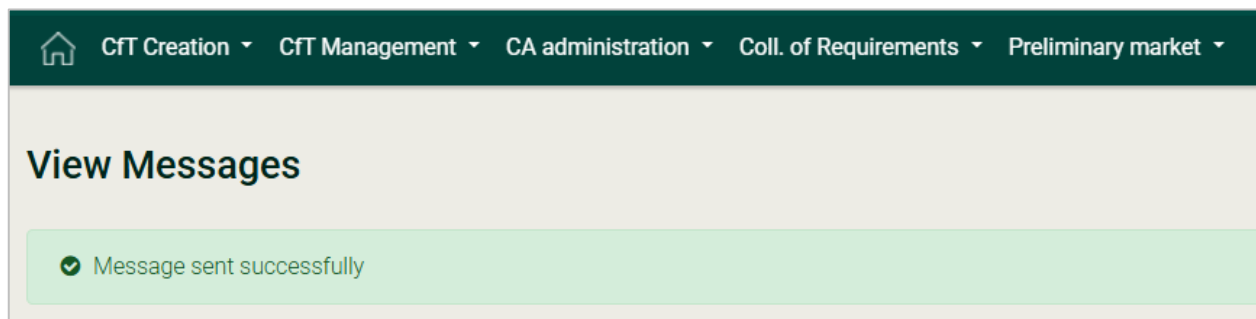


Figure 26

[End of Document.]