



Carlow County Council
Guidance Notes for Suppliers on:
www.etenders.gov.ie:

- Accessing eTenders Competitions
- Retrieving Competition Documents
- Utilising the Messaging Facility
- Responding to a Tender

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Introduction

All Public Bodies, generally referred to as Contracting Authorities in procurement, operating in the Republic of Ireland are subject to National and EU public procurement rules on the award of contracts for goods/supplies, works and services.

Contracting Authorities, such as Carlow County Council, are obliged to publicly publish their tender requirements on the Irish Government procurement website www.etenders.gov.ie that are over certain threshold values (see table on page 5), and in, addition, to advertise higher value contracts in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

The etenders website is the primary tool used by Public Bodies (and by those in receipt of public funding) to advertise their requirements for supplies, works and services. This portal, provided by the Government of Ireland through its procurement agency the Office of Government Procurement (OGP), is also part of a larger European Union public procurement platform. It is a fully electronic and confidential tool supporting the advertising of tender transactions.

Potential users of this site should note that there is **no** charge to self-register, to access competition details, or receive alerts regarding posted competitions.

Procurement Methods

There are effectively 6 procurement methods that Contracting Authorities may exercise, depending on competition values and procurement regulations:

- i. **Quotations** – under this method a Contracting Authority has certain discretion over who it chooses to invite to submit a quotation. Carlow County Council currently requires that all quotations above €5,000 are issued via the Simplified Procedure facility on the eTenders platform. Carlow’s Threshold and Related Procurement Procedures state that quotes from 3 or more service providers must be sought for goods and services and that 5 or more quotations should be obtained for works. Service providers (economic operators) are selected from those registered on the eTenders platform.
- ii. **National Tenders** – this is where a Contracting Authority, such as Carlow County Council, must advertise its requirements, above certain thresholds, to all potential bidders on the www.etenders.gov.ie and comply with the specific rules and protocols on tendering for national level competitions. Details on these thresholds can be found later in this guidance note.
- iii. **EU Tenders** – this is when a Contracting Authority must advertise its requirements to all potential bidders in the European Journal, in addition to www.etenders.gov.ie, due to the value of the proposed competition and comply with specific rules and protocols related to EU competitions. The competition notice for such competitions will appear on the Official Journal of the European Community (OJEU), making it accessible to all EU Member States (in addition to other countries signatory to various EU trade deals such as the European Economic Area and the Government Procurement Agreement of the World Trade Organisation). The official OJEU website is www.ted.europa.eu. The specific rules of EU tendering are defined by EU legislation¹.

In addition to the above, Contracting Authorities may also operate certain other procurement methods including:

- iv. **Framework Agreement** – Contracting Authorities may award contracts via mini competitions/direct drawdown under Framework Agreements (FWAs) established by Central

¹ Directive 2014/23/EC of the European Parliament and Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement (transposed in Irish law by SI 284 of 2016 – European Union (Award of Public Authority Contracts) Regulations, 2016)

Purchasing Bodies (such as the Office of Government Procurement or the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre), or by collaborative groups of organisations (such as a number of Local Authorities operating together to aggregate demand), or by regional arrangement (such as those offered by Transport Infrastructure Ireland to Local Authorities), and under Framework Agreements set up by a Contracting Authority itself.

Once a Framework Agreement is established the list of qualified suppliers *cannot* be changed for a fixed number of years, often a 4-year period. When a mini competitions is undertaken the details of these are *not* publicly visible. All qualified members of a Framework Agreement are invited to submit a bid at each mini-competition stage. For information, the competition to establish the Framework Agreement would have been previously advertised on www.etenders.gov.ie / OJEU.

- v. **Dynamic Purchasing Systems** – Another procurement method that may be used by a CA is engagement with an establish Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS). Again, these are lists of qualified suppliers (economic operators) for the appropriate supplies or service requirements, however, *unlike* Framework Agreements, these arrangements are *constantly open for access* for potential qualified economic operators (supplier) to apply to be added, during the undertaking lifetime, subject to successfully fulfilling the original qualification conditions. The establishment of the original DPS was subject to public advertising, via www.etenders.gov.ie/ OJEU. Similarly to Framework Agreements, individual contracts, usually via mini-competition being awarded under the DPS, are not publicly visible. Likewise, all DPS qualified members, including those added during the lifetime of the DPS, are invited to tender at each mini-contract stage.
- vi. **SupplyGov.ie** – Contracting Authorities, such as Carlow County Council, may use competitions provided via the www.SupplyGov.ie portal, a platform provided by the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC), that offers frameworks and dynamic purchasing systems in the specific categories of minor building works and plant hire. Individual contracts, usually via mini-competition being awarded under these arrangements, are not publicly visible. The formation of these competition arrangements, accessible for use by all public bodies, will have also been broadcast in the first instance on the www.etenders.gov.ie portal.

From all of the above methodologies it is clear that the eTenders portal plays a major role in Public Procurement. It is vital that any supplier interested in doing business with Public Bodies, is registered on the eTenders system to ensure they do not miss out on quotation and tendering opportunities.

Thresholds and Related Procurement Procedures

The thresholds and related procurement procedures relating to the procurement methods can be summarised as follows:

Procurement Method	Supplies	Services	Works
Quotations	Less than €5,000 (excl. VAT)	Less than €5,000 (excl. VAT)	Less than €5,000 (excl. VAT)
Simplified Procedure (via eTenders portal)	Between €5,000 and €50,000	Between €5,000 and €50,000	Between €5,000 and €200,000
National Tenders – Central Government	Between €50,000 and €143,000	Between €50,000 and €143,000	Between €200,000 and €5,538,000
National Tenders – Local Authorities / Bodies Governed by Public Law	Between €50,000 and €221,000	Between €50,000 and €221,000	Between €200,000 and €5,538,000
EU Tenders – Central Government	Greater than €143,000	Greater than €143,000	Greater than €5,538,000
EU Tenders – Local Authorities / Bodies Governed by Public Law	Greater than €221,000	Greater than €221,000	Greater than €5,538,000
EU Tenders TITLE III Services*	n/a	Greater than €750,000	n/a
EU Tenders Concessions**	n/a	Greater than €5,538,000	Greater than €5,538,000

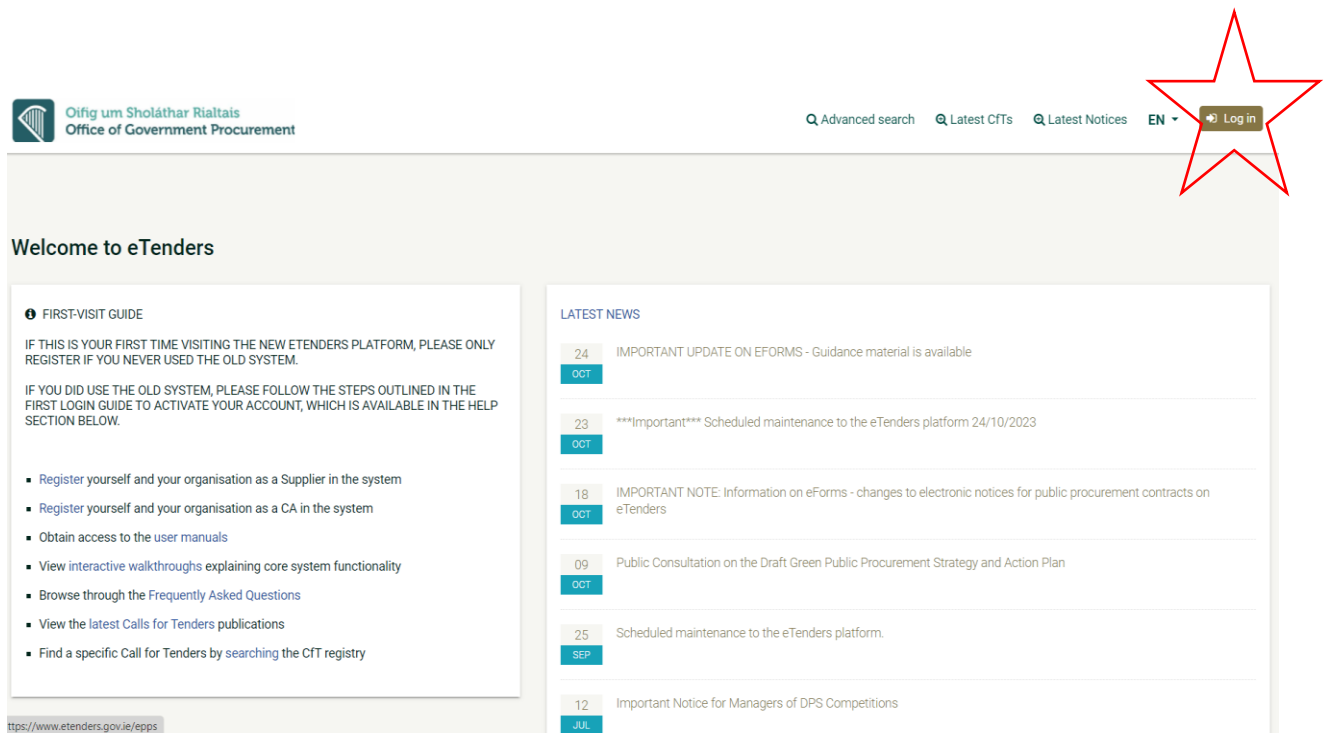
*Title III Services as defined in the Directives include training and education, social and related services, catering and hotel services, security services, etc.

**Concession Contracts are contracts based upon two fundamental aspects – remuneration and risk. The remuneration is paid for by those using the service/work and the risk (being a significant element of the risk involved) must be taken by the concessionaire. A typical service concession is a bank ATM machine or a coffee shop concession at a public building/facility. An example of a Works concession is a toll road.

Accessing eTenders Competitions

This guidance document aims to explain the process involved for economic operators (suppliers) responding to Quotations (including simplified procedure), Tenders or Mini-Competitions, via the www.etenders.gov.ie website.

Log on to www.etenders.gov.ie and click on the Login button (as indicated by the red star) entering you assigned username and password.



Office of Government Procurement

Advanced search Latest CFTs Latest Notices EN **Log in**

Welcome to eTenders

FIRST-VISIT GUIDE

IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME VISITING THE NEW ETENDERS PLATFORM, PLEASE ONLY REGISTER IF YOU NEVER USED THE OLD SYSTEM.

IF YOU DID USE THE OLD SYSTEM, PLEASE FOLLOW THE STEPS OUTLINED IN THE FIRST LOGIN GUIDE TO ACTIVATE YOUR ACCOUNT, WHICH IS AVAILABLE IN THE HELP SECTION BELOW.

- Register yourself and your organisation as a Supplier in the system
- Register yourself and your organisation as a CA in the system
- Obtain access to the user manuals
- View interactive walkthroughs explaining core system functionality
- Browse through the [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- View the latest Calls for Tenders publications
- Find a specific Call for Tenders by searching the CFT registry

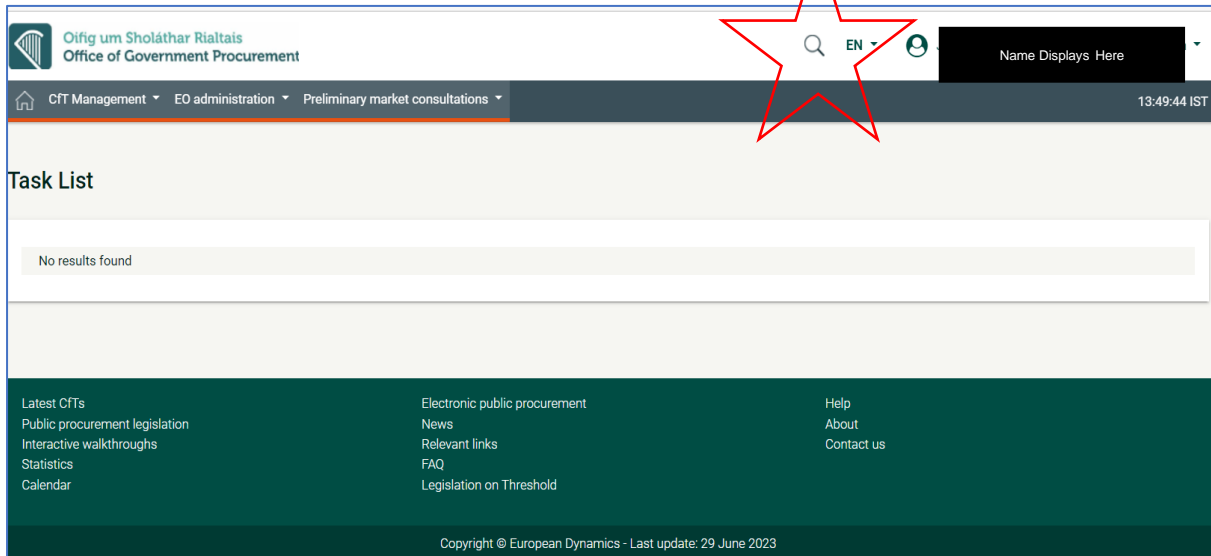
LATEST NEWS

- 24 OCT IMPORTANT UPDATE ON EFORMS - Guidance material is available
- 23 OCT ***Important*** Scheduled maintenance to the eTenders platform 24/10/2023
- 18 OCT IMPORTANT NOTE: Information on eForms - changes to electronic notices for public procurement contracts on eTenders
- 09 OCT Public Consultation on the Draft Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan
- 25 SEP Scheduled maintenance to the eTenders platform.
- 12 JUL Important Notice for Managers of DPS Competitions

<https://www.etenders.gov.ie/epps>

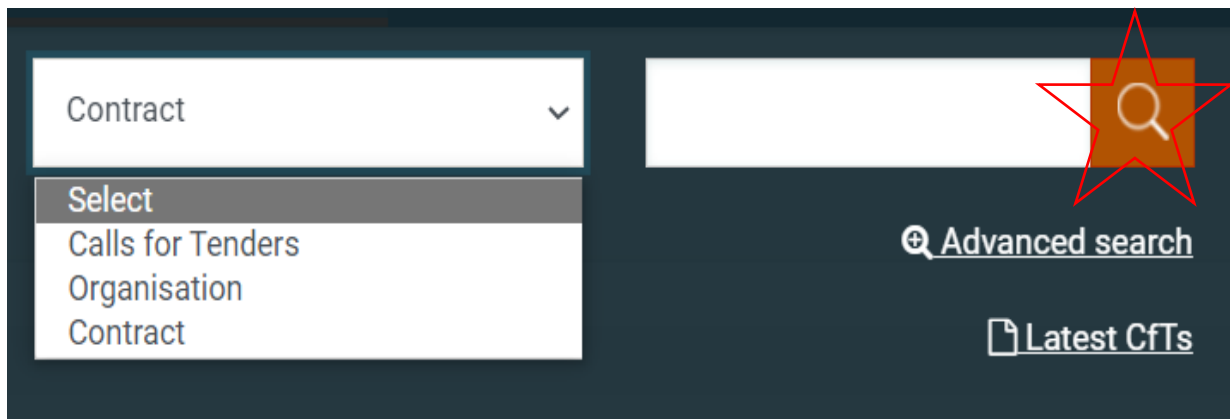
(Please note that if this is your first time to use eTenders please follow the on-screen instructions on left)

Once you login this is the landing page that you should see. Now click on the search button (as indicated by the red star).



The search button displays the following sub-screen to you. By clicking the down-arrow button the options of *Call for Tenders*, *Organisation* or *Contract* display for your selection.

Once an option is selected type the 'key' information in the other box provided and click on the 'search key' (as indicated by the red star).



Users should note, however, that you **CANNOT** associate within this search. It is recommended that Advanced search is used, to get more details, and to associate with a selected competition.

Once *Advance search* is selected the table below displays.

Users may select any searchable tab to seek out broadcasted competitions. The most commonly used are the 3 highlighted (*in red ovals above*):

CFT Resource ID – this is the unique competition reference number, normally a seven-digit numeral. Registered Economic Operator (Supplier) on the eTenders platform receive notification when a new tender competition is posted that includes the Suppliers selected Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) Code(s). Such messages contain the Cft Resource ID number.

Title – type in the title of any key word(s) from the tender competition name. Again, as a registered Economic Operator on the eTenders platform you receive notification when a new tender competition is broadcast, that matching your market operation function (via CPV codes). Such messages contain the title of any advised new competition.

Name of Contraction Authority – simply type in the name of entity/company/authority that ‘owns’ the tender competition. For example, by entering *Carlow County Council* in the search box provided all competitions uploaded by this Authority to this platform will display, as per example below.

SEARCH RESULTS

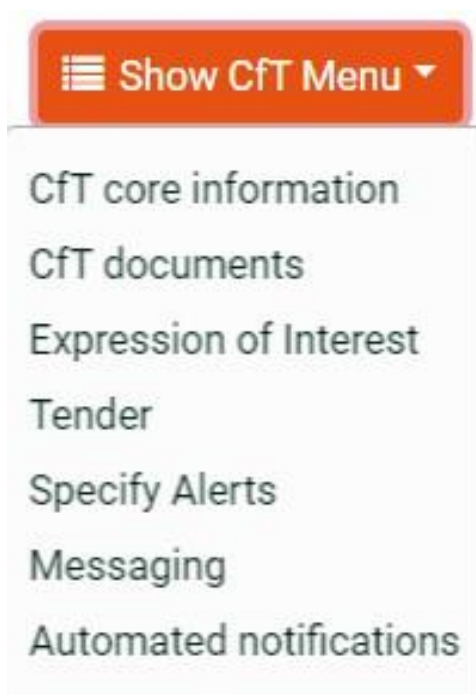
10 Results Per page | Displaying: 1-10 | 23 results in total.

#	Title	Resource ID	CA	Date published Info	Tenders Submission Deadline	Procedure	Status	Notice PDF	Award date	Estimated value	Cycle
1	Provision of Food Supplies and Services in respect of accommodation facilities (Rest Centre) provided by Carlow County Council in response to the Humanitarian Crisis	2694460	Carlow County Council	19/11/2023 09:43:53	15/12/2023 12:00:00	Open	Tender Submission			500,000.00	1
2	Provision of Consultant Judge for Carlow's Pride of Place Competition	2680969	Carlow County Council	10/11/2023 09:56:09	11/12/2023 12:00:00	Open	Tender Submission			54,000.00	1
3	Consultancy Services Construction of an Outdoor Hub – Toilets, Changing Rooms, Lifeguard, First Aid Station and associated works at Dunleckny, Bagenalstown, [Adj; Swimming Club / R705] Co. Carlow	2535743	Carlow County Council	12/10/2023 11:19:41	27/11/2023 17:00:00	Open	Tender Submission			30,000.00	1
4	Conversion of an existing 3-bedroom residential unit into two self-contained apartments and all associated site works at No.2 Main Street, Myshall, Co. Carlow	2439856	Carlow County Council	25/09/2023 10:48:01	30/10/2023 16:00:00	Open	Evaluation			70,000.00	1
5	Consultancy Services for the Construction of a Social Residential Scheme of 12nr Units including all associated Demolition Works, Retention Works and Siteworks at Main St, Hacketstown, Co. Carlow	2382788	Carlow County Council	10/09/2023 16:24:27	11/10/2023 17:00:00	Open	Evaluation				1
6	Structural Fire Fighting Suits for Carlow County Fire and Rescue Service	2327483	Carlow County Council	01/09/2023 11:30:16	29/09/2023 12:00:00	Open	Evaluation			10,000.00	1
7	Export to Belgium - Client Development Visit 2024	2325949	Carlow County Council	29/08/2023 22:41:48	19/10/2023 12:00:00	Open	Awaiting Tender Opening			25,000.00	1
8	Single storey self-contained dwelling unit attached to the side of an existing dwelling at The Bungalow, Ballinakillbeg, Bennekery, Co Carlow.	2302957	Carlow County Council	24/08/2023 16:27:29	02/10/2023 16:00:00	Open	Evaluation			120,000.00	1
9	REFURBISHMENT AND CONSTRUCTION WORKS TO 2No APARTMENT UNITS AND ALL ASSOCIATED SITE WORKS AT HAYMARKET, CARLOW TOWN	2301022	Carlow County Council	24/08/2023 15:03:37	22/09/2023 16:00:00	Open	Evaluation			200,000.00	1

It is important to use the dropdown option to display more than 10 competitions (*as indicated by the red star*), ensuring that all tendering opportunities of the Authority are display.

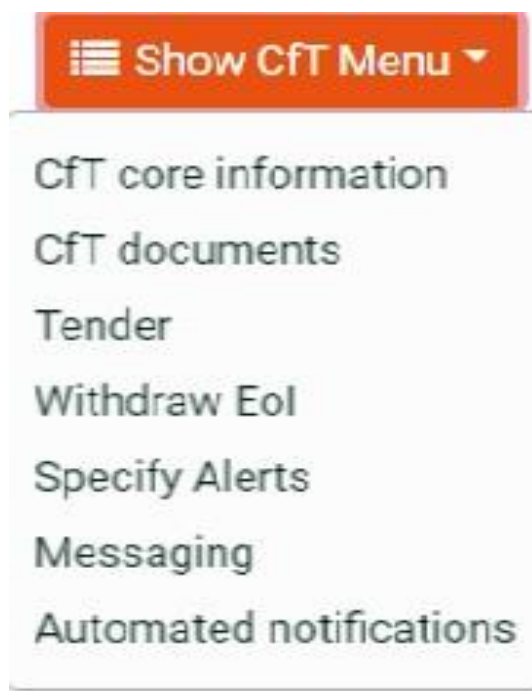
The title of each tender is a hyperlink to details of each competition. Clicking the hyperlink presents Economic Operators with the CfT Workspace, which provides an overview of the proposed competition.

The top right displays a tab *Show CfT Menu*, clicking on this menu display the following options to you:



If this competition is of interest to you then you should click on *Expression of Interest*. This will display a screen titled *ASSOCIATION WITH CfT*. We recommend selection option 1. *Associate all users of my Economic Operator with this CfT*. Then press *SELECT*.

Explanation of offerings available under Show CfT Menu:



CfT core information – selecting this option displays high level information on the competition.

CfT documents – selecting this offering provides you with access to the competition documents. (See further details below in this document).

Tender – this link brings you to the tender submission space. (See further details below in this document).

Withdraw EoI – this allows you to withdraw your expression of interest should the details and documents be unsuitable for your area of expertise.

Specific Alerts – This tab allows you to set alerts for tasks and timelines.

Messaging – select this to send, receive and view messages regarding the specific competition. (See further details below in this document).

Automated notifications – this option allows you associate additional member of your organisation with this specific competition.

Retrieving Tender Competition Documents

As indicated previously in **Accessing eTenders Competition**, click on the *Tender* key on the *Show CFT Menu* to access the space displaying *Notices and Contract Documents*:

Notice & Contract Documents

CFT: POBAL Show CFT Menu

Notices **Contract Documents**

10 Results Per page | Displaying all 8 matches.

Addendum ID	Title	File	Description	Lang.	Document Versions	Actions
N/A	Project RFT - Supply - Request for Tender	RFT - Supply - Request for	Project RFT - Supply - Request for Tender	EN		
N/A	Appendix 4 ESPD	ESPD REQUEST.pdf	Appendix 4 ESPD	EN		
N/A	Appendix 5 HR System Goods Contract sample	Project Goods Contract - Over	Appendix 5 HR System Goods Contract sample	EN		
N/A	Appendix 6 Confidentiality Agreement	Project Confidentiality Agreement	Appendix 6 Confidentiality Agreement	EN		
N/A	Appendix 7 HR Systems Tender Response Form	Project Tender Response	Appendix 7 HR Systems Tender Response Form	EN		
N/A	Tender Structure XML - Cycle 1	c4t_1906641_1.xml	N/A	EN		

DOWNLOAD ZIP FILE

Ensure the *Contract Documents* tab is selected and displaying. You can now download the documents individually under the *File* tab (by clicking on the file name) or use *DOWNLOAD ZIP FILE* button.

Using the Messaging Facility

Click on the *Messaging* key on the *Show CfT Menu* to access the eTenders messaging facility. Once selected the following will display:

The screenshot shows a web interface for the messaging facility. At the top, there are four tabs: 'Inbox', 'Sent Messages', 'Draft Messages', and 'Export'. Below the tabs, there are two input fields: 'Subject:' and 'From:'. To the right of the 'From:' field is a 'COMPOSE' button. Below the input fields is a 'SEARCH' button. At the bottom of the interface, a message states 'No results found'.

If you have a query or you are seeking a clarification of competition details, you must ALWAYS use the messaging service provided by on the eTender portal. Use of this services facility *only* is normally called out as a competition requirement from Carlow County Council. You are advised not to use direct email or phone call to raise questions in electronically broadcast competitions. To proceed with your message press *COMPOSE* key. The following will then display:

The screenshot shows the 'CREATE MESSAGE' form. It has a title 'CREATE MESSAGE' at the top. Below the title are two input fields: 'Subject: *' and 'Body: *'. Below the 'Body' field are two attachment fields: 'Attachment 1:' and 'Attachment 2:'. Each attachment field has a 'Choose File' button and the text 'No file chosen'. Below the attachment fields is a 'Confidential: *' section with two radio buttons: 'Yes' and 'No'. At the bottom right of the form are three buttons: 'BACK', 'SAVE AS DRAFT', and 'SEND'.

Of Note:

Use a suitable/obvious reference in the SUBJECT box.

Type your query in the BODY space provided.

If required, you can attach documents with your message about the competition.

HOWEVER, PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS **NOT** THE TENDER SUBMISSION AREA!!

While you can select the message to be confidential it is likely, in an active competition, that the response to your message will be shared with all potential bidders.

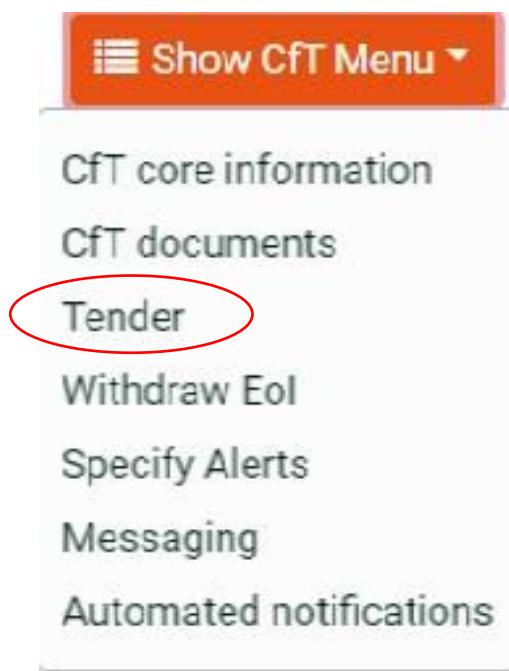
You will receive an email advising when any competition message is broadcast, via Messaging Tab.

Submitting a Response

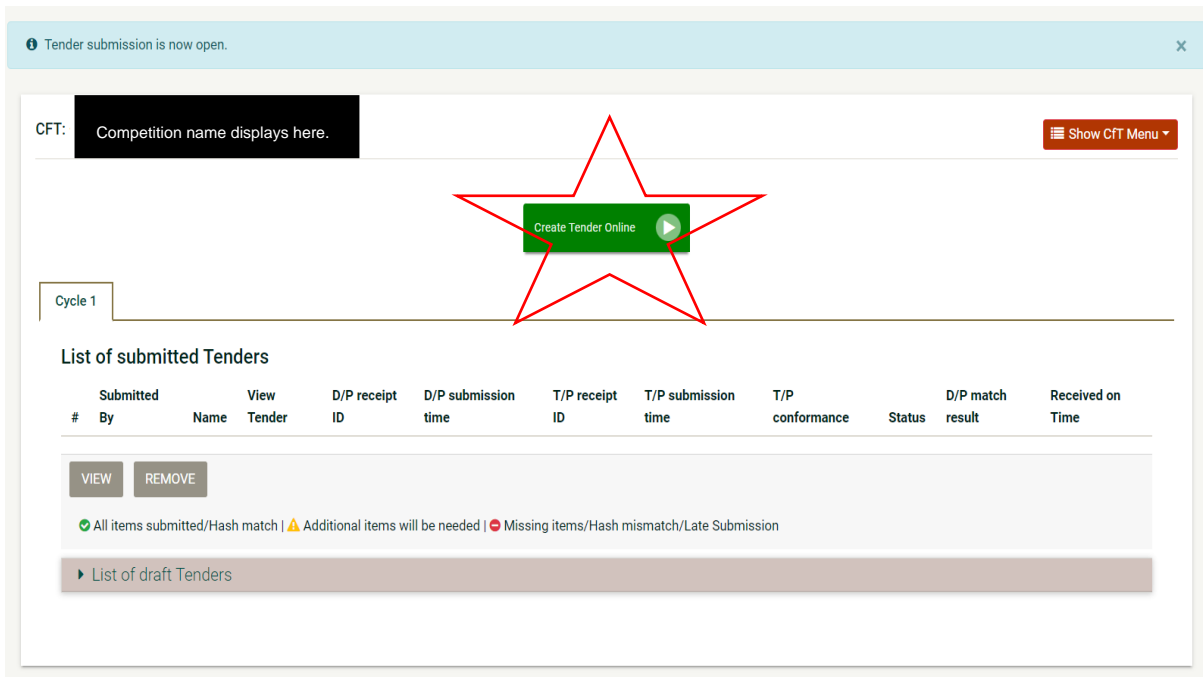
There are a number of very important matters to observe at this vital stage of competition:

- Be cognisant of the competition submission time and date; remember it will not be possible to submit a tender response once the time/date have passed, so, set yourself an early reminder now!
- Give yourself plenty of time for this important function; consider commencing this process *the day before* the required submission time/date.
- Check that you have assembled and saved ALL of your completed final documents for submission.
- Revisit these documents ensuring that you have addressed **ALL** questions and requests asked of you in the published documents.
- Before submitting a response *always* re-check the instructions in the competition documents for any specific requirement, such as font size, page number limits or, for example, there may be a requirement to use a provided tender response document (TRD).
- Ensure the file names you have chosen are relevant, logical, and follow any specific protocols requested. For example, you may be requested to upload your submission as a zip file.

Once you have satisfied yourself that you have observed all of the above instructions, log in, find the competition you intend responding to by selecting and clicking the name of the competition (the competition name, in blue text is a hyperlink). Now selected *Tender* from the dropdown *Show CfT Menu*.



The following screen will display:



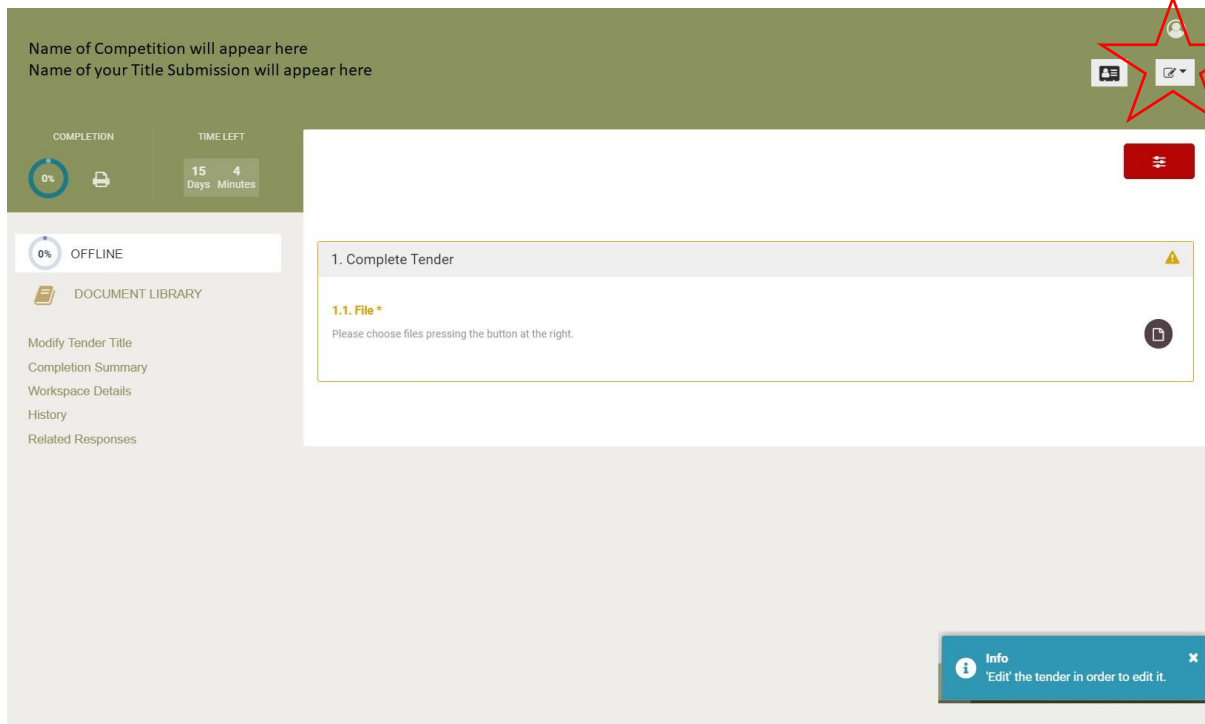
Now, click on the Green Tab, *Create Tender Online* (as indicated above by the red star). This will bring you to the next screen. Follow instructions on screen and click the *Save* Tab.

Create Response

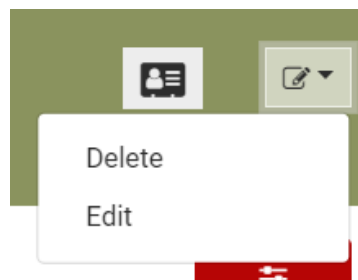
Provide a meaningful title that describes your response. The title will not be visible to the Buyer, it will help you navigate efficiently and distinguish between multiple tender submissions.

Save

This should bring you to a screen where you will have the opportunity to start loading your documents:

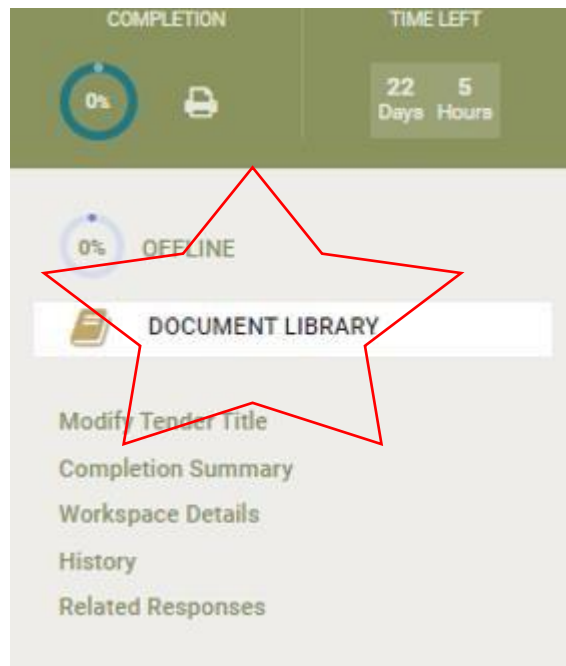


You are required to select *edit* to continue with this process. This function may be found at the top right-hand corner of the screen (*as indicated above by the red star*).



Select edit from the options (*a per the image above*). If correctly enabled the screen will display a *success* tab.

Once this edit task is successfully done you now should click on the *DOCUMENT LIBRARY* tab (as indicated below by the red star).



Now, use the *Choose Files* or *Drag and Drop* tab to get them to the Queue.

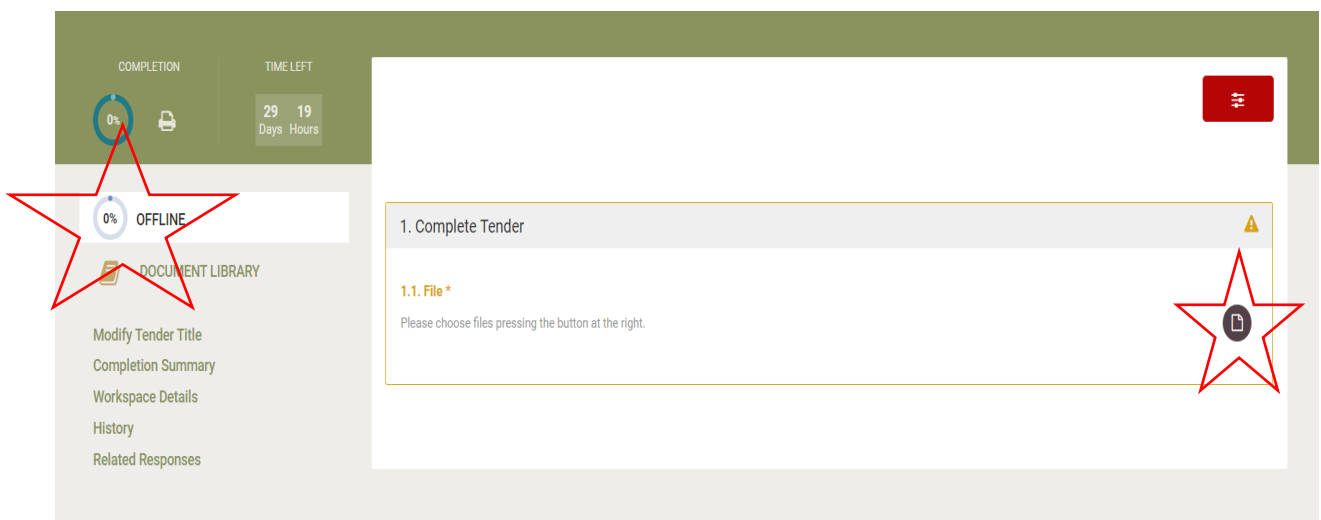
You should always upload your tender submission as a Zip File. *Please do not upload individual files.*

Bidders should note that there are File Size Limits: 250 MB per file, and 500MB total space per response.

Moving from Queue to Uploaded:

When you click on the *UPLOAD* tab your file will progress to 100% and indicate SUCCESS, File uploaded.

Please note, you must now associate your documents with the competition!!



To associate your documents with the competition click the OFFLINE tab (*as indicated by the red star*).

This will bring you back to the Complete Tender window.

Now click on the PAGE ICON tab.

N.B. 100% displaying here DOES NOT MEAN you have submitted yet AND even though the display stated OFFLINE it does not mean that the system is offline!

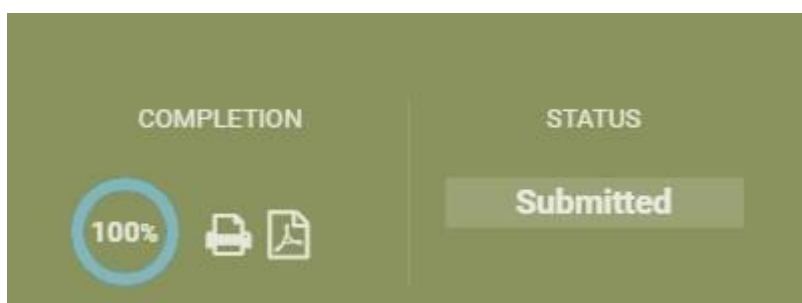
You are required to click on each file and insert a comment in the space provided.

Once complete you will receive a message Successful, The associated files have been updated.

Final Step for Submitting:



Once you are satisfied that ALL of your files for submission are correct then proceed by clicking on the Submit TAB, visible beside the edit tab (*and as indicated by the red star*).



Please note that the above **MUST** appears on screen to confirm that your tender is actually submitted.

Assistance with eTenders

This guidance has been developed to support Economic Operators interested in engaging with Carlow County Council's procurement competitions, posted on the eTenders portal.

This document should *not* be seen as definitive guidance, and this Authority accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of this guide's content provision.

All queries regarding accessing, submitting and engagements of the eTenders platform, including any issues technical or otherwise should, in the first instance, be addressed to the eTenders Helpdesk:

Email: irish-eproc-helpdesk@eurodyn.com

Phone: +353 818001459

Please note phone and online support are available between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Explanation of Acronyms & Abbreviations

CA	Contracting Authority (i.e. Carlow County Council)
CAN	Contract Award Notice
CAPC	Contracting Authority Procurement Coordinator
CAPCA	Contracting Authority Procurement Coordinator Assistant
CAPO	Contracting Authority Procurement Officer
CfT	Call for Tender (previously referred to as RFT-Request for Tender)
CPV	Common Procurement Vocabulary
CWFM	Capital Works Framework Management
DPS	Dynamic Purchasing System
EO	Economic Operator (supplier/organisation)
EO Admin	Economic Operator (supplier/organisation) Administrator
EO User	Economic Operator (supplier/organisation) User
FA/FWA	Framework Agreement
MEAT	Most Economically Advantageous Tender (Best Price-Quality Ratio)
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OJEU	Official Journal of the European Community
PDF	Portable Document File
PIN	Prior Information Notice
PMC	Preliminary Market Consultation
PO	Procurement Officer
PO/ES	Procurement Officer/Evaluating Staff
PO/ESR	Procurement Officer/Evaluating Staff Responsible
PO/OS	Procurement Officer/Opening Staff
PO/TC	Procurement Officer/Tender Coordinator
ProcRef No	Procurement Reference Number (assigned competition reference)
ProcType	Procurement Type (type/method of procurement used)
SA	System Administrator
SC	Specific Contract (in the context of an FA/FWA or DPS)
SP	Simplified Procedure (electronic quotations system on eTenders)
TED	Tender Electronic Daily
WS	Workspace
XML	Extended Markup Language

