Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community

Operating guide for the ZRE web interface

Operating guide for manually creating electronic invoices (and test invoices) in the XRechnung standard, for submission to Germany's federal administration

Last updated: 7 December 2022

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Help desk: +49 30 2598 4436

Monday to Friday from 8:00 to 16:00

How are electronic invoices in the XRechnung standard created and submitted using Germany's Federal Central Invoice Submission Portal (ZRE)?

Background / Basics

As part of its digital transformation strategy, the German government has set up a portal for submitting electronic invoices to the federal administration. It is called the **Federal Central Invoice Submission Portal (ZRE)** (*Zentrale Rechnungseingangsplattform des Bundes*)[1] and can be accessed at **https://xrechnung.bund.de**.

You can use the ZRE portal to create electronic invoices and send them to recipients within the federal administration. During the process, electronic invoices are automatically checked to ensure that they are formally correct and complete. Details of requirements and accepted formats for electronic invoices can be found in the ZRE terms of use, which can be accessed via the ZRE portal.

The invoices you create are forwarded within the ZRE to the customer by means of a buyer reference (*Leitweg-ID*), which the customer should have provided you with. Please ask your customer for a buyer reference if they have not yet provided you with one.

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[1] The comprehensive organisational strategy behind the transmission of electronic invoices via the ZRE can be found here (in German).

You can submit electronic invoices via the ZRE using the following transmission methods:

- Web submission (https://xrechnung.bund.de)
- Upload (https://xrechnung.bund.de)
- Email (xrechnung@portal.bund.de)
- De-Mail (xrechnung@portal-bund.de-mail.de)
- Peppol

Please note that no matter which transmission method you use, you will have to create a ZRE account.

About this guide

The purpose of this operating guide is to familiarise suppliers and service providers with the web interface of the ZRE portal, which can be accessed here: https://xrechnung.bund.de. The steps involved in creating and submitting an electronic invoice are explained using screenshots of the English-language version of the web interface.

To use the ZRE portal, you will need a user account. To create a user account, you must register with the portal as an invoice sender.

The data displayed in this operating guide are fictitious and are included only as examples.

Contents

1 Creating a new ZRE user account

As an invoice sender you can access the ZRE portal at https://xrechnung.bund.de, which will take you straight to the **login page**. Here you can either sign in with your username and password or create a new user account. At the bottom of this page you can change the language from German to English.

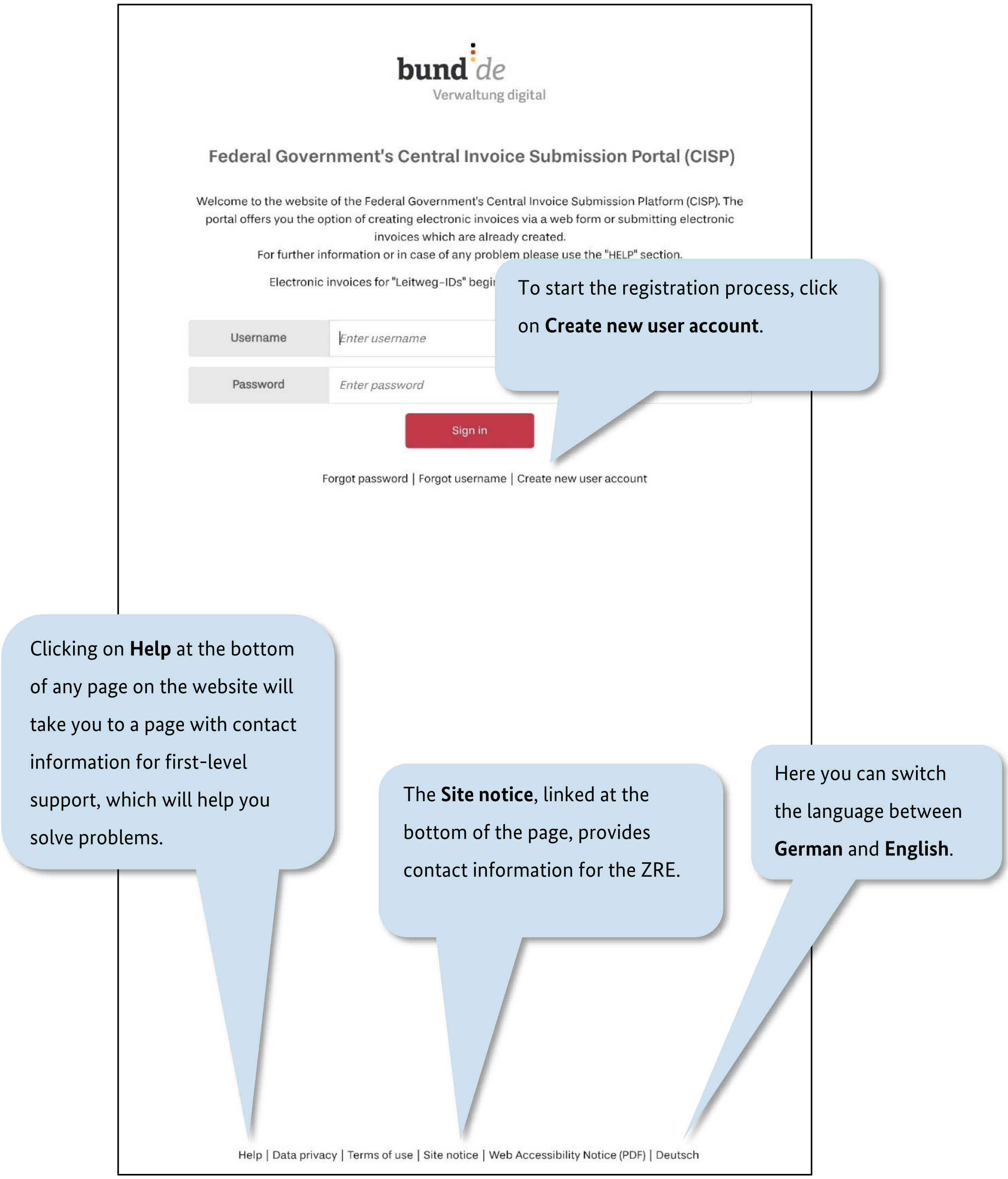

Figure 1.1 Login page

Clicking on **Create new user account** will take you to the registration page, where you can create an account.

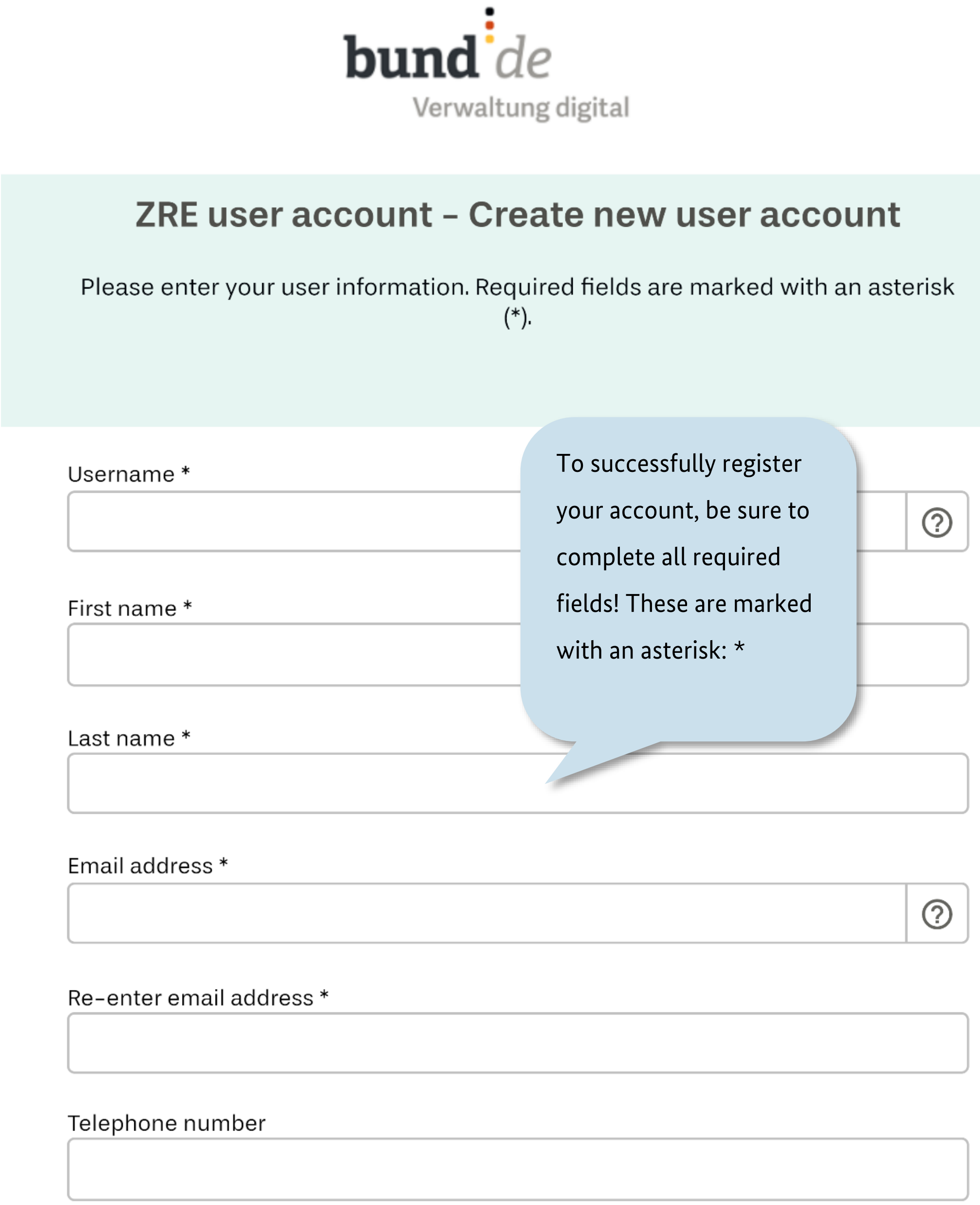

Figure 1.2 Creating a new ZRE user account (registration) (I/II)

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Please create your password according to the specified requirements.

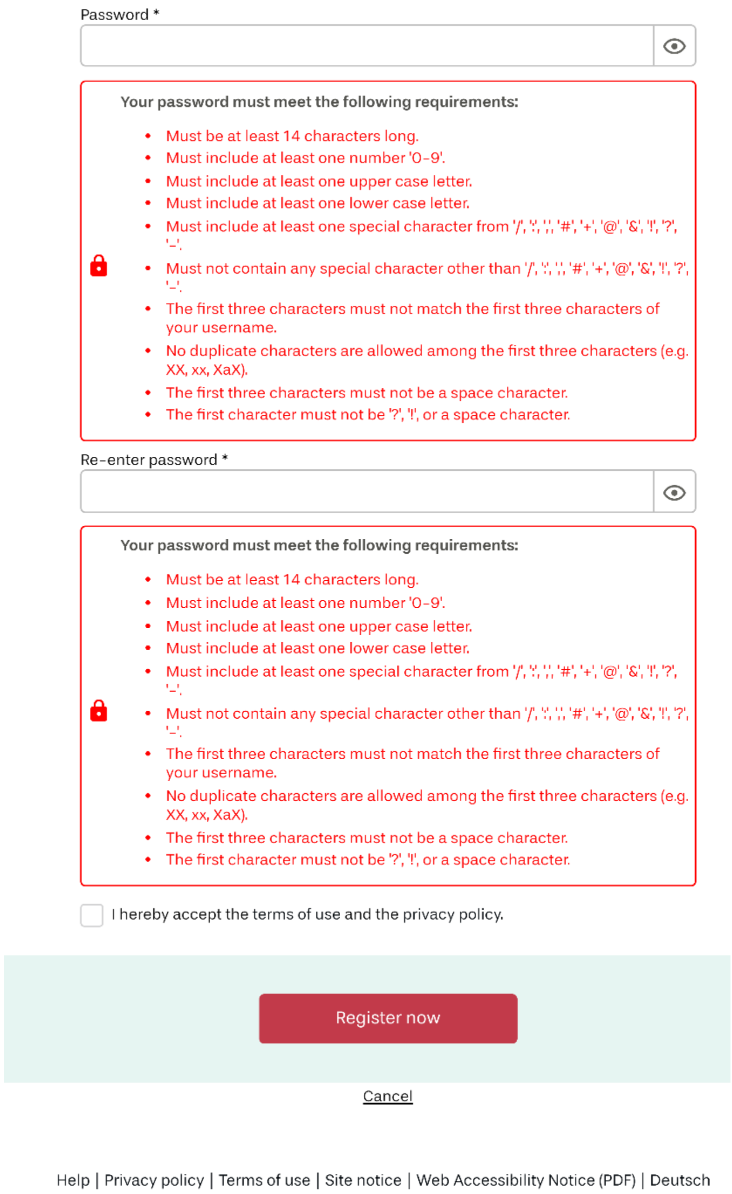

Figure 1.3 Creating a new ZRE user account (registration) (II/II)

Having successfully registered your account, you will see the following message informing you that a link has been sent to your email address. Please click on the link to activate your user account.

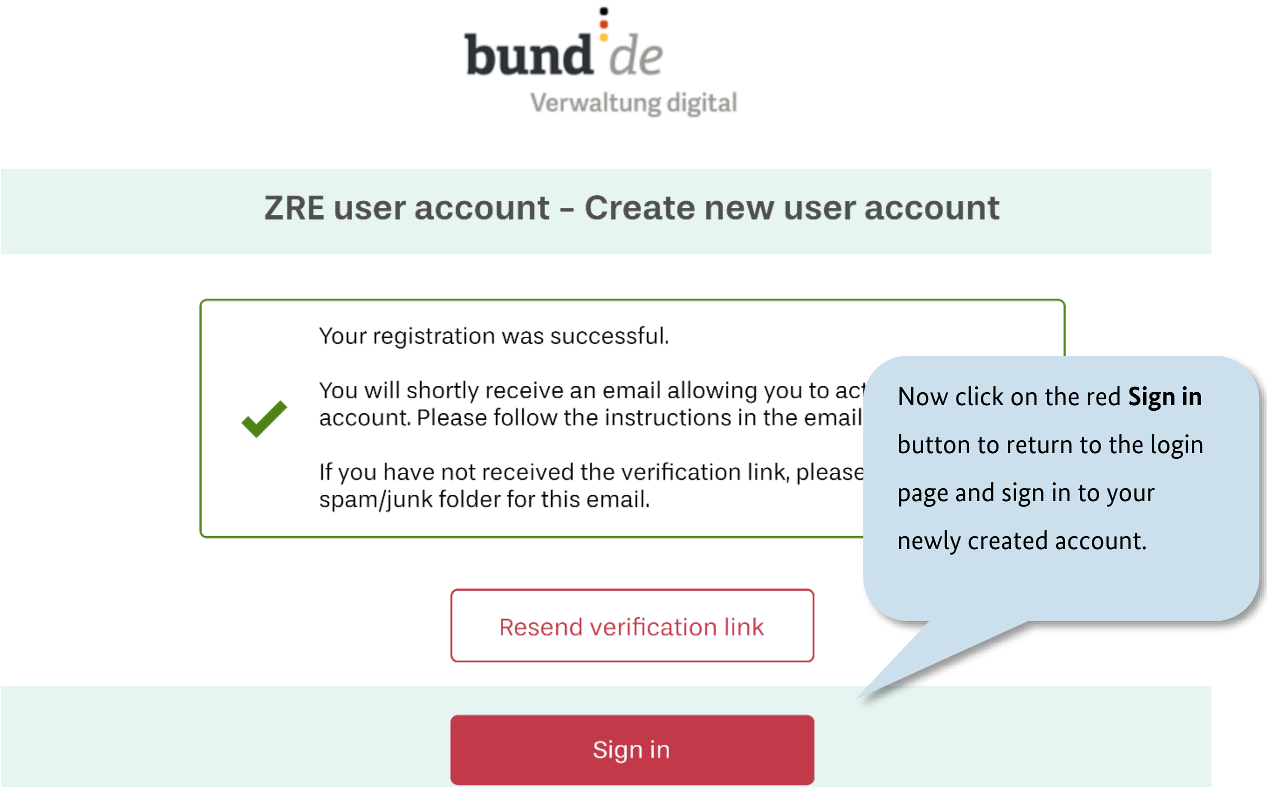

Figure 1.4 Confirmation of successfully registered ZRE user account

Clicking on the activation link will take you to the screen shown below.

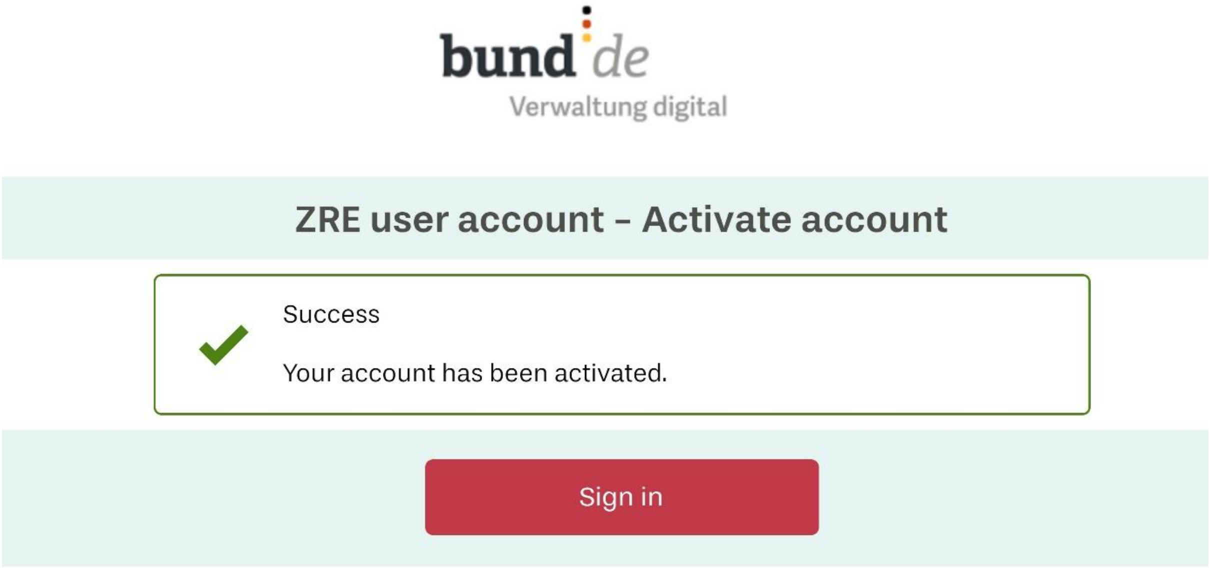

Figure 1.5 Confirmation of successfully activated ZRE user account

Your user account has been activated. You can now sign in to the ZRE portal and set up one or more invoicing accounts (i.e. company accounts or other legal entity accounts) which you will need in order to use the portal.

2 Signing in to your ZRE user account

If you are already registered as an invoice sender, you can access the ZRE portal at https://xrechnung.bund.de and sign in to your account.

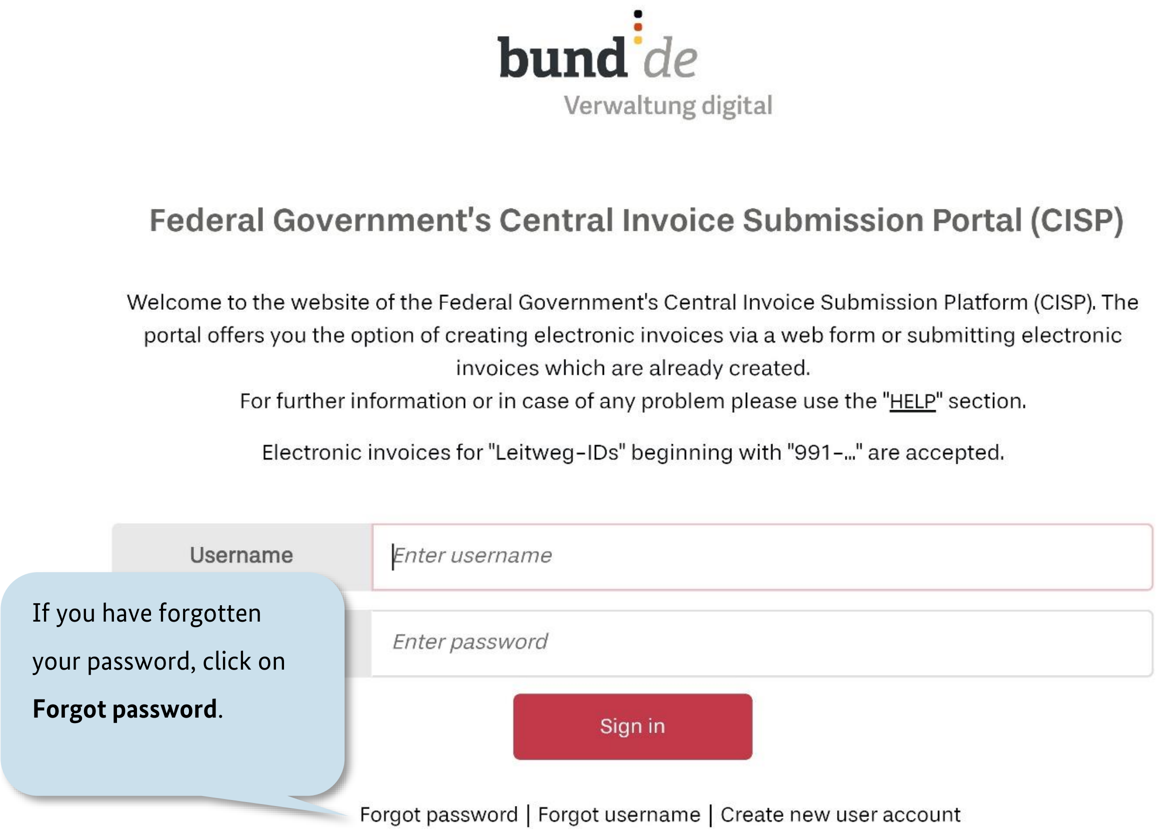

Figure 2.1 Login page – Forgot password

To receive an email link to reset your password, you will need to enter your username.

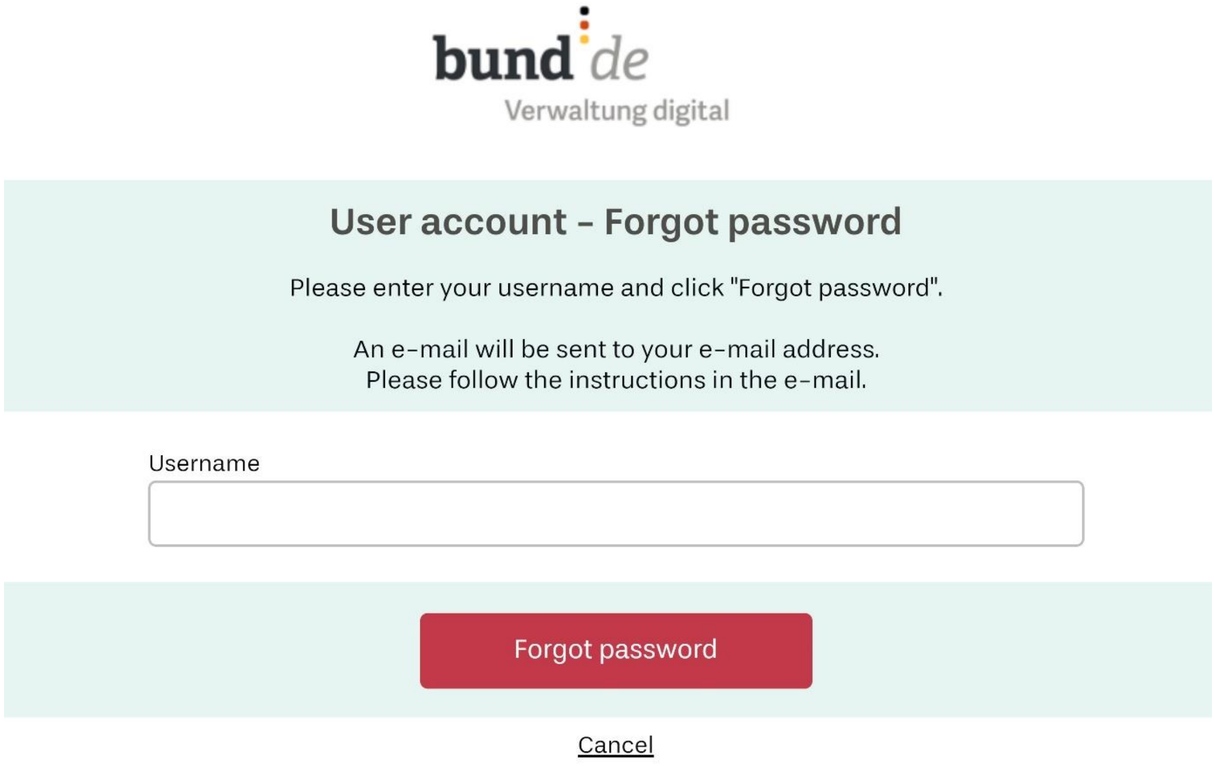

Figure 2.2 Forgot password – Enter username

You will then see the message below informing you that you have been sent an email (with a link) containing further instructions.

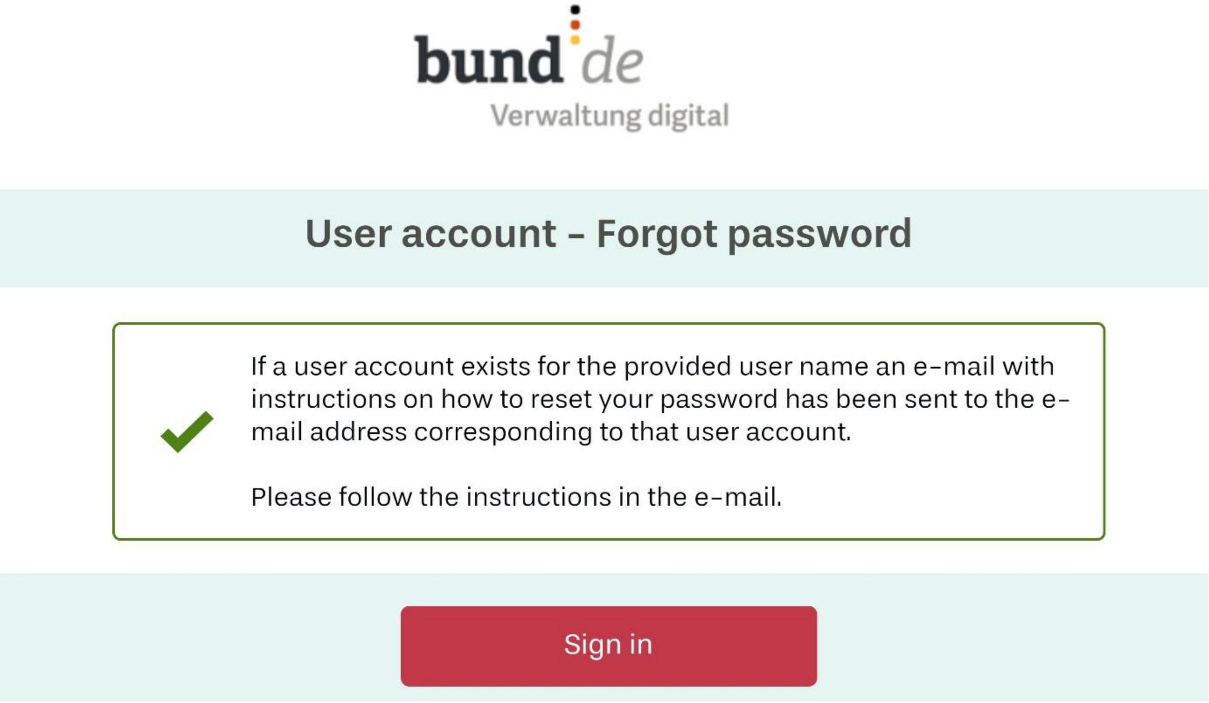

Figure 2.3 Forgot password – Link sent via email

The link in the email will take you to the screen shown below, where you can enter a new password. Please create your new password according to the specified requirements.

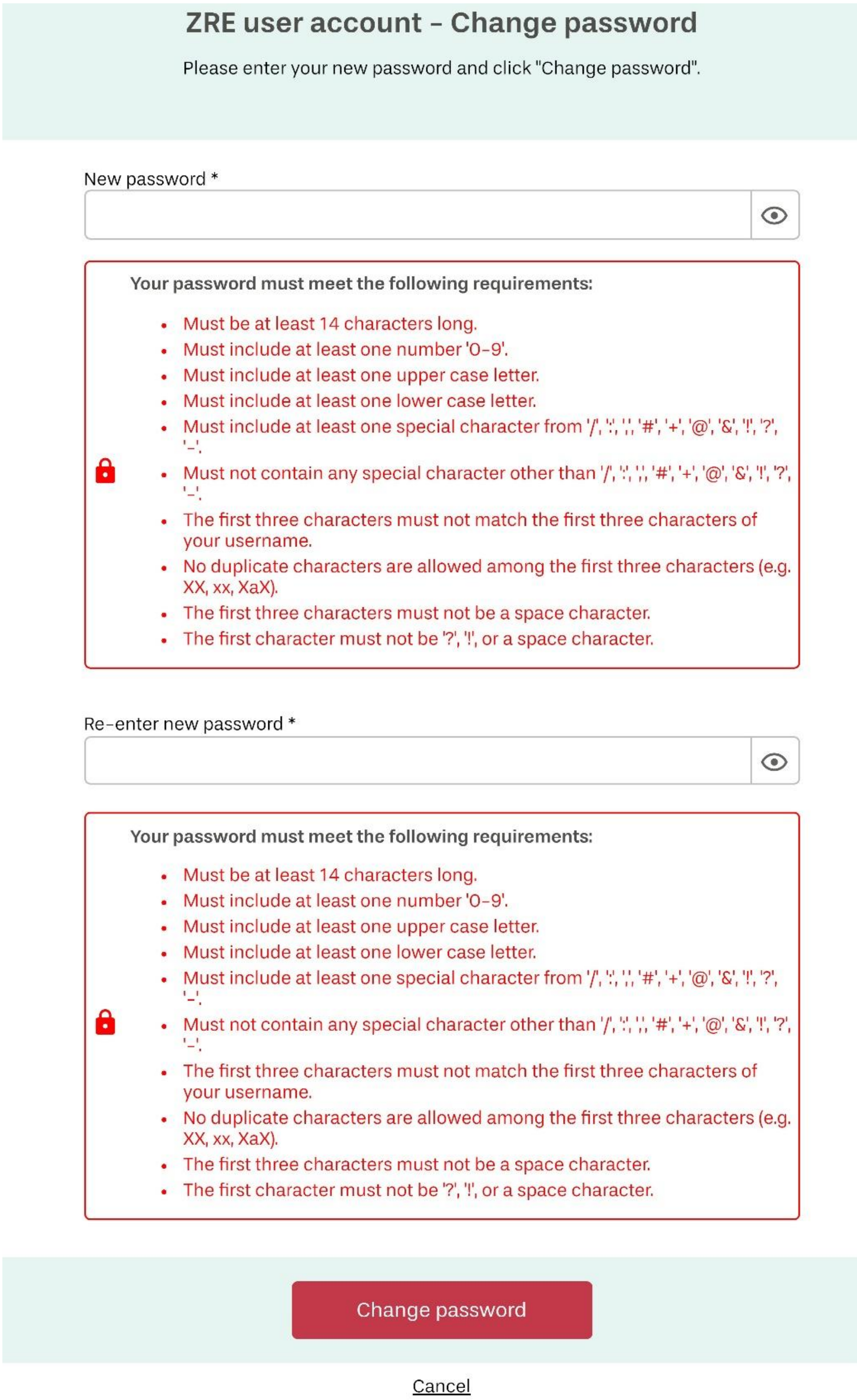

Figure 2.4 Forgot password – Change password

If the password in the field **New password** matches the one in the field **Re-enter new password**, you will see a message confirming that the password was changed successfully. From there you can return to the login page.

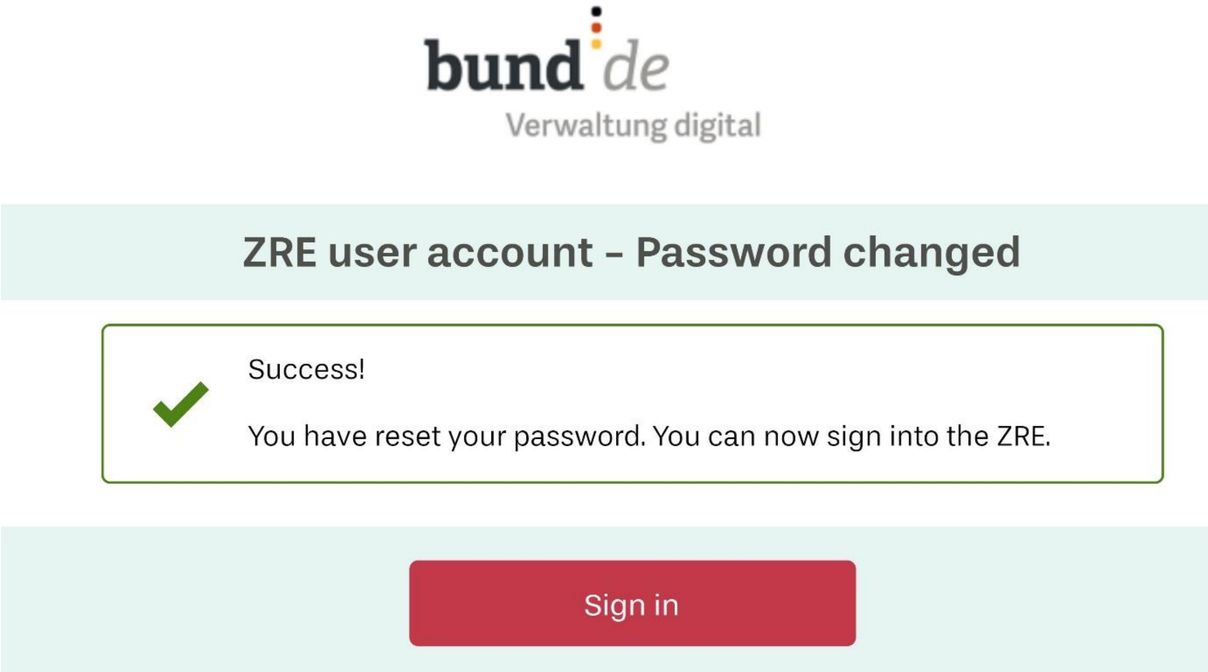

Figure 2.5 Forgot password – Password changed successfully

2.1 Account overview

Once you have signed in, you will first need to choose an account with which to operate the ZRE. The first time you sign in to your personal account, you will see only one ZRE account with which to create and submit e-invoices. To set up an additional account (e.g. for your company or another legal entity), click on **Start user management** (see section 3).

Your choice of account does not affect the functions available in the ZRE portal. Once you have chosen the account you wish to use, you will be taken to the invoice dashboard, where you can select one of four options. For detailed information on the different options, see section 4 onwards.

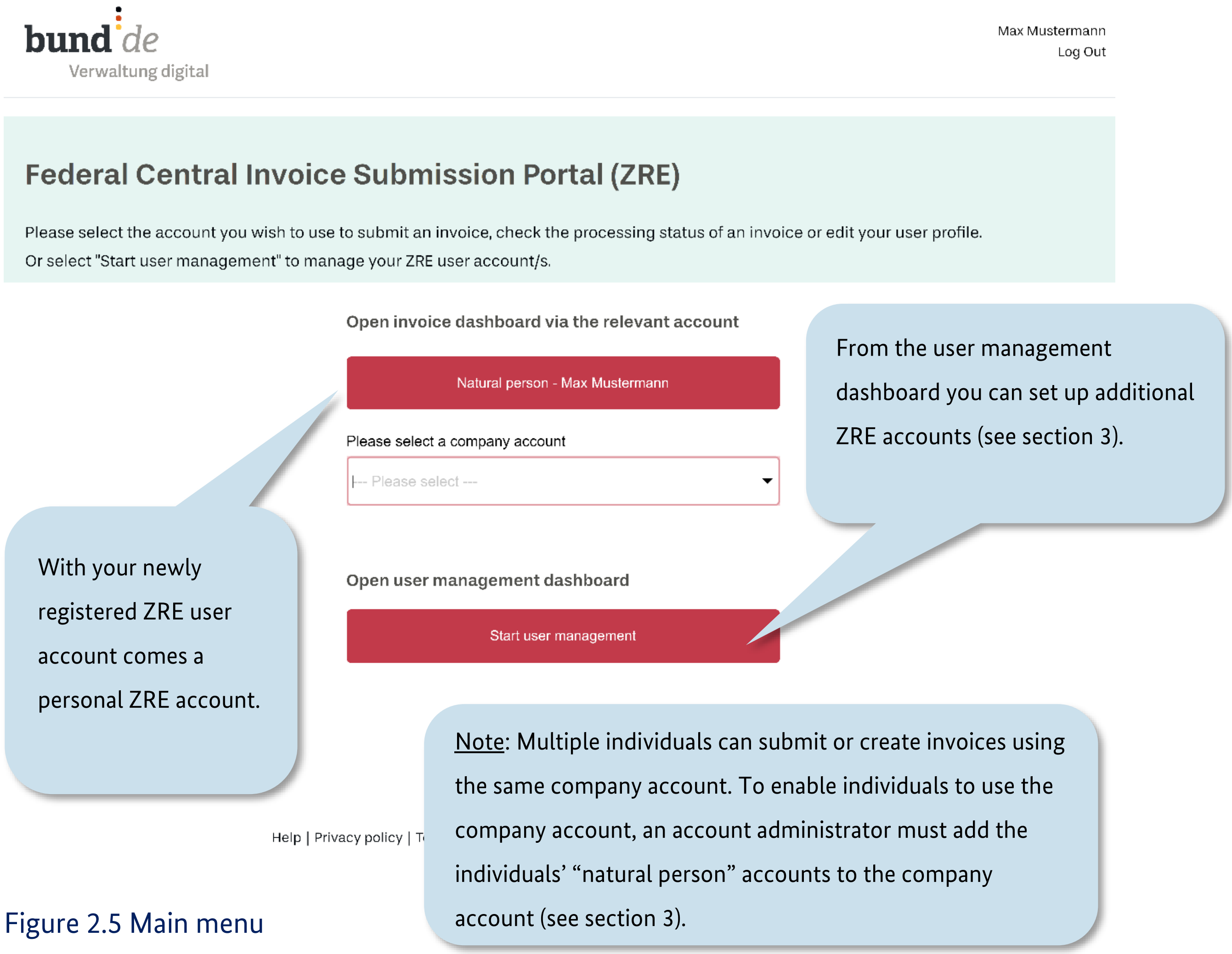

Figure 2.5 Main menu

2.2 Registering your personal ZRE account

If you are using the ZRE for the first time, your personal ZRE account must be enabled to create invoices. For this, one final step is required. When you click the button “Natural person...” to access the invoice dashboard, you will first be taken to the page shown below.

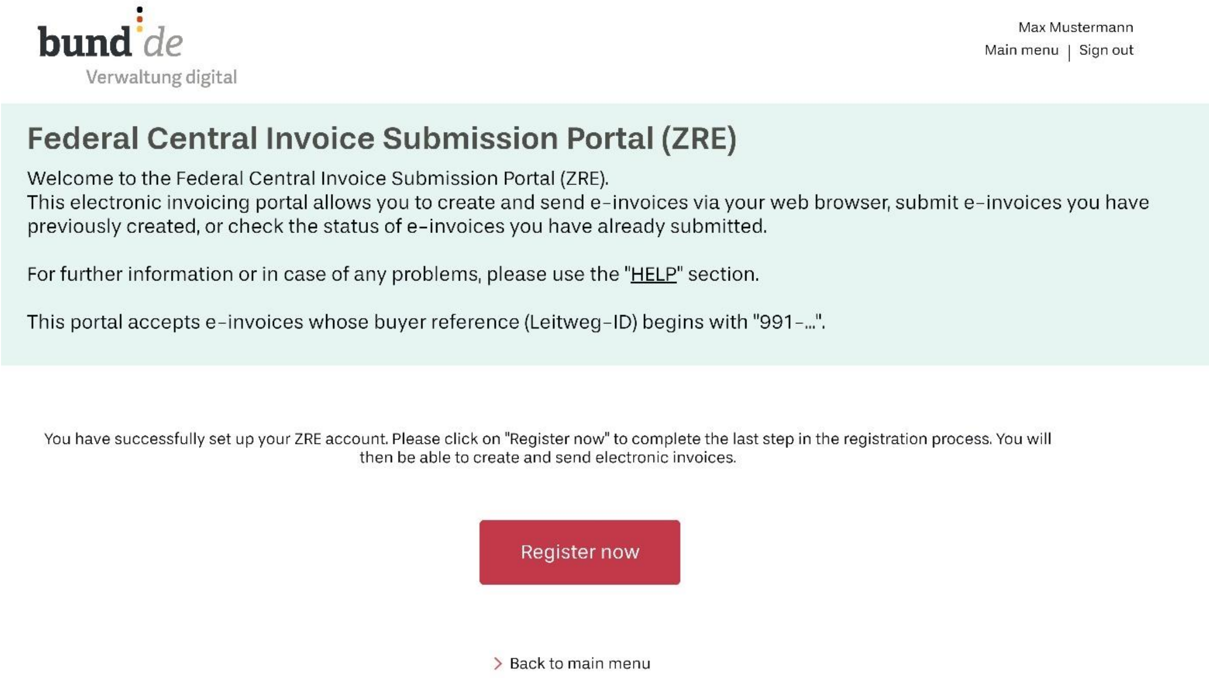

Figure 2.6 Registering a new ZRE account

At this point you are prompted to click on “Register now”, which completes the last step in the registration process. You will then be able to create and send electronic invoices. Here it is important to provide a contact email address, not a no-reply address.

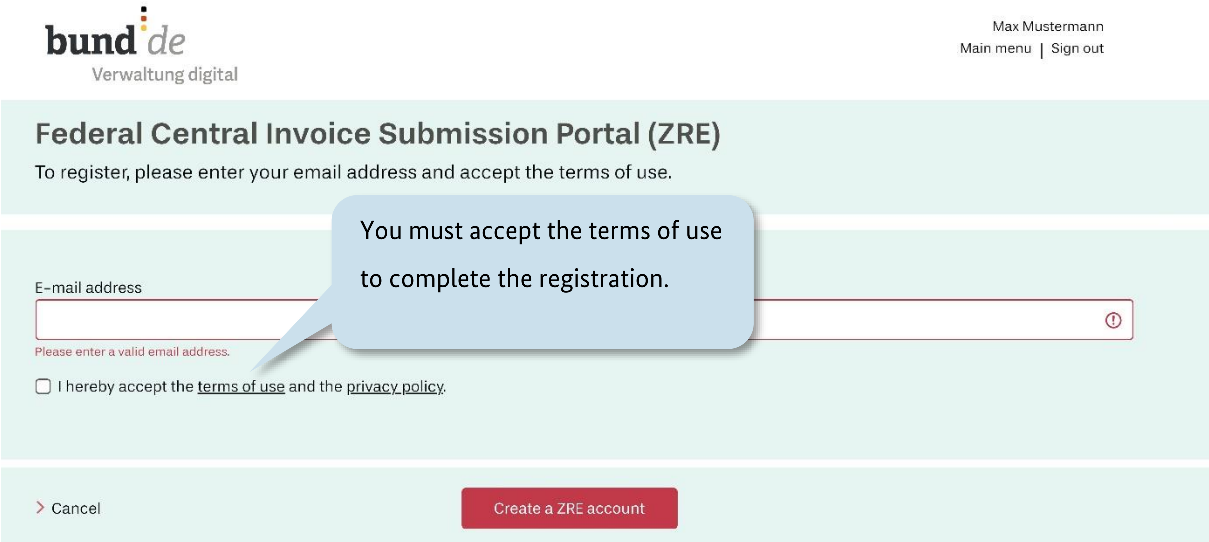

Figure 2.7 Registering a new ZRE account – Enter email address

After you have entered your email address and accepted the terms and conditions, you will receive another **activation link** by email.

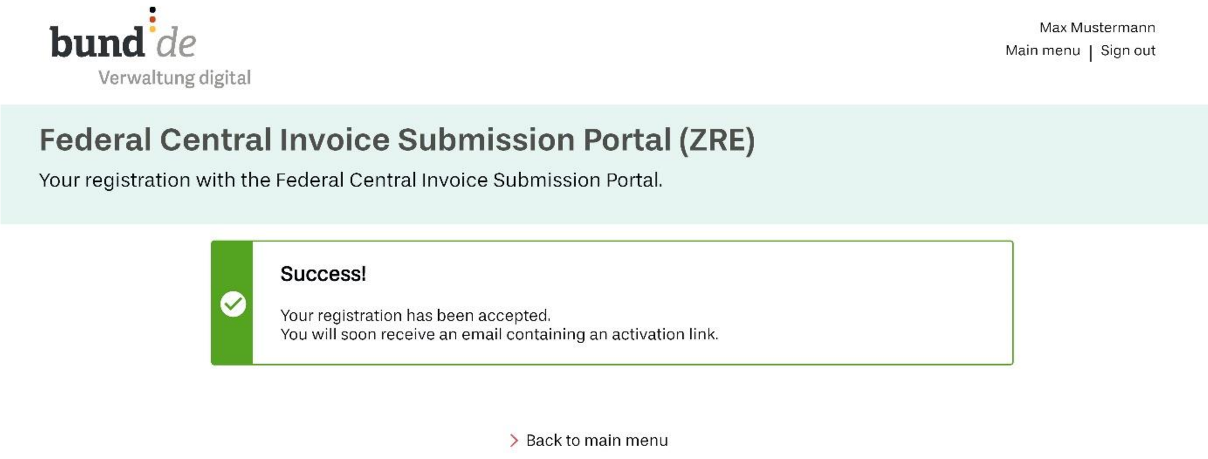

Figure 2.8 Registering a new ZRE account – Activation link via email

As soon as you have clicked on the activation link in the email, the registration of your ZRE account is complete. The next time you log in, you will see the following message:

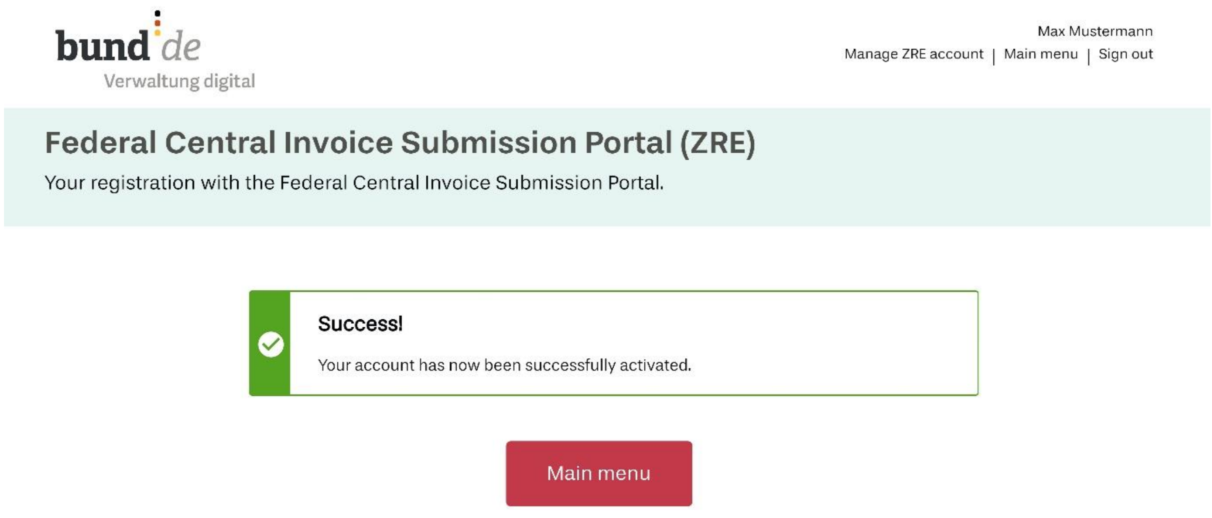

Figure 2.9 Registering a new ZRE account – Successful activation of ZRE account

You are now ready to start creating invoices. Please note: if you wish to use email or De-Mail as transmission methods, you will first have to activate them before sending invoices in this way (see section 10).

If you cannot find the activation link in your email inbox, please check your spam/junk folder.

3 User management

To open the user management dashboard, click on **Start user management** in the main menu.

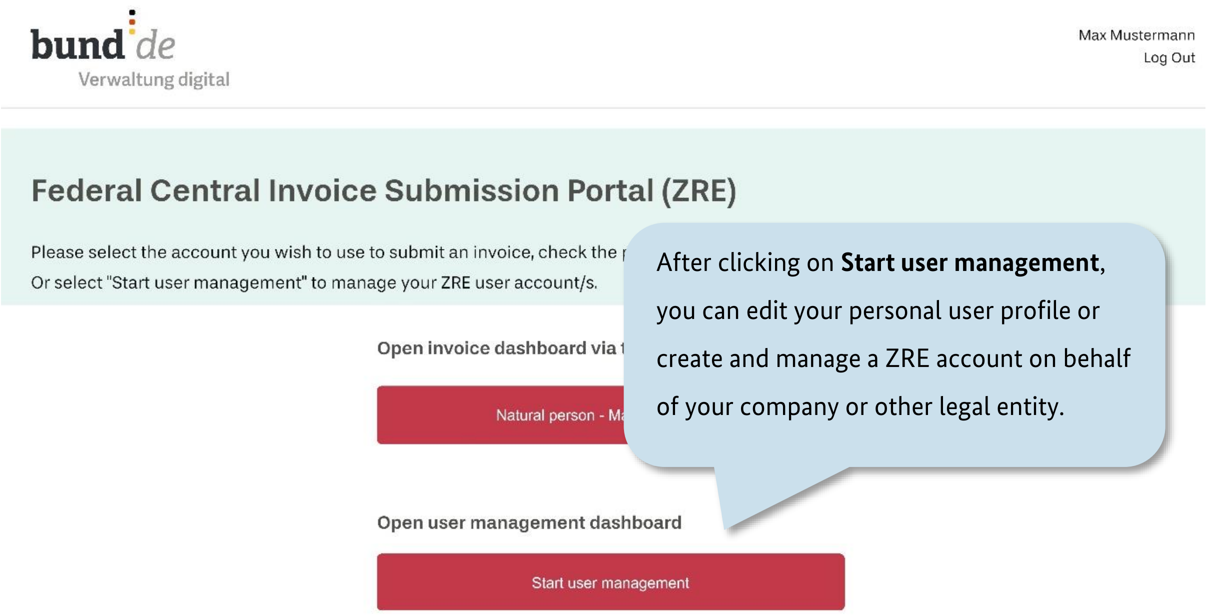

Figure 3.1 Starting user management from the main menu

The user management dashboard gives you five options to choose from. Apart from editing your own user profile, you can create and manage a company account and add users. Select one of the options.

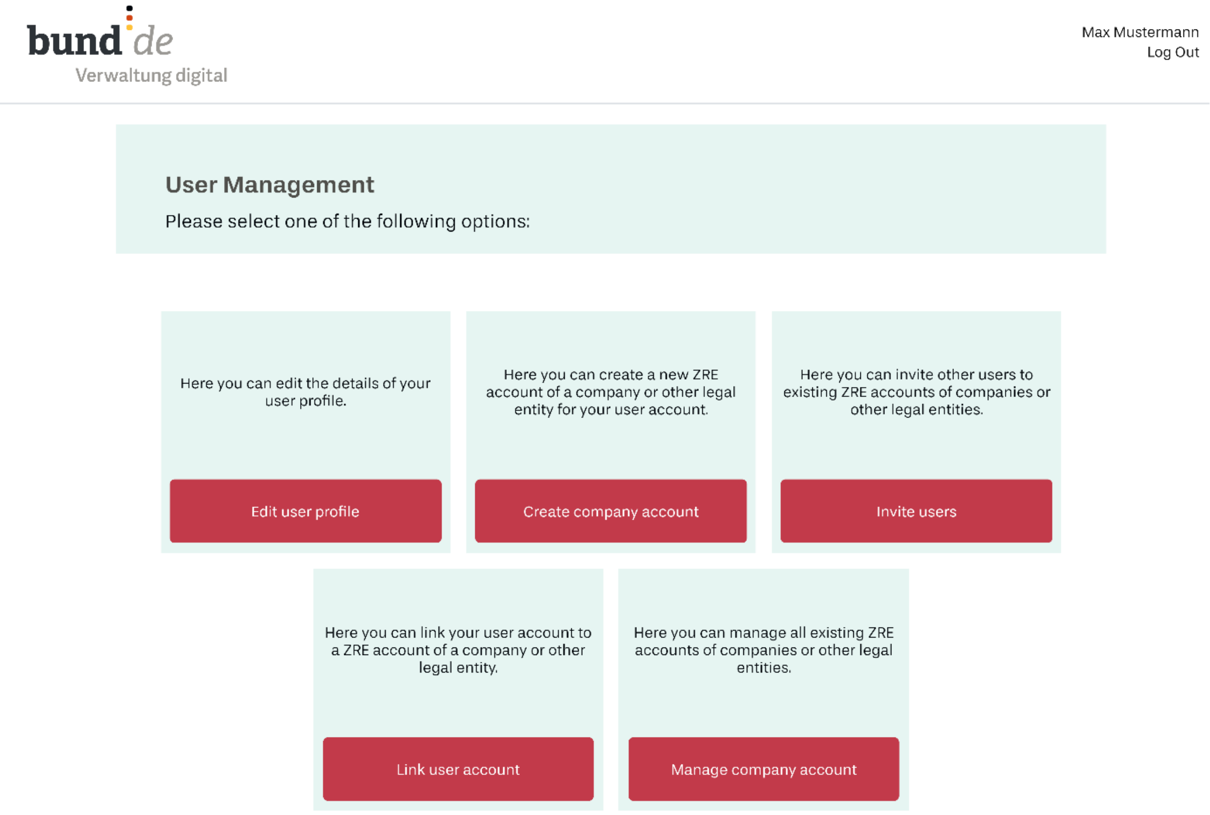

Figure 3.2 User management dashboard

3.1 Editing your user profile

The first of the five options on the user management dashboard is **Edit user profile**. From the “Edit my profile” page you can manage your personal data and settings, change your password or delete your user account.

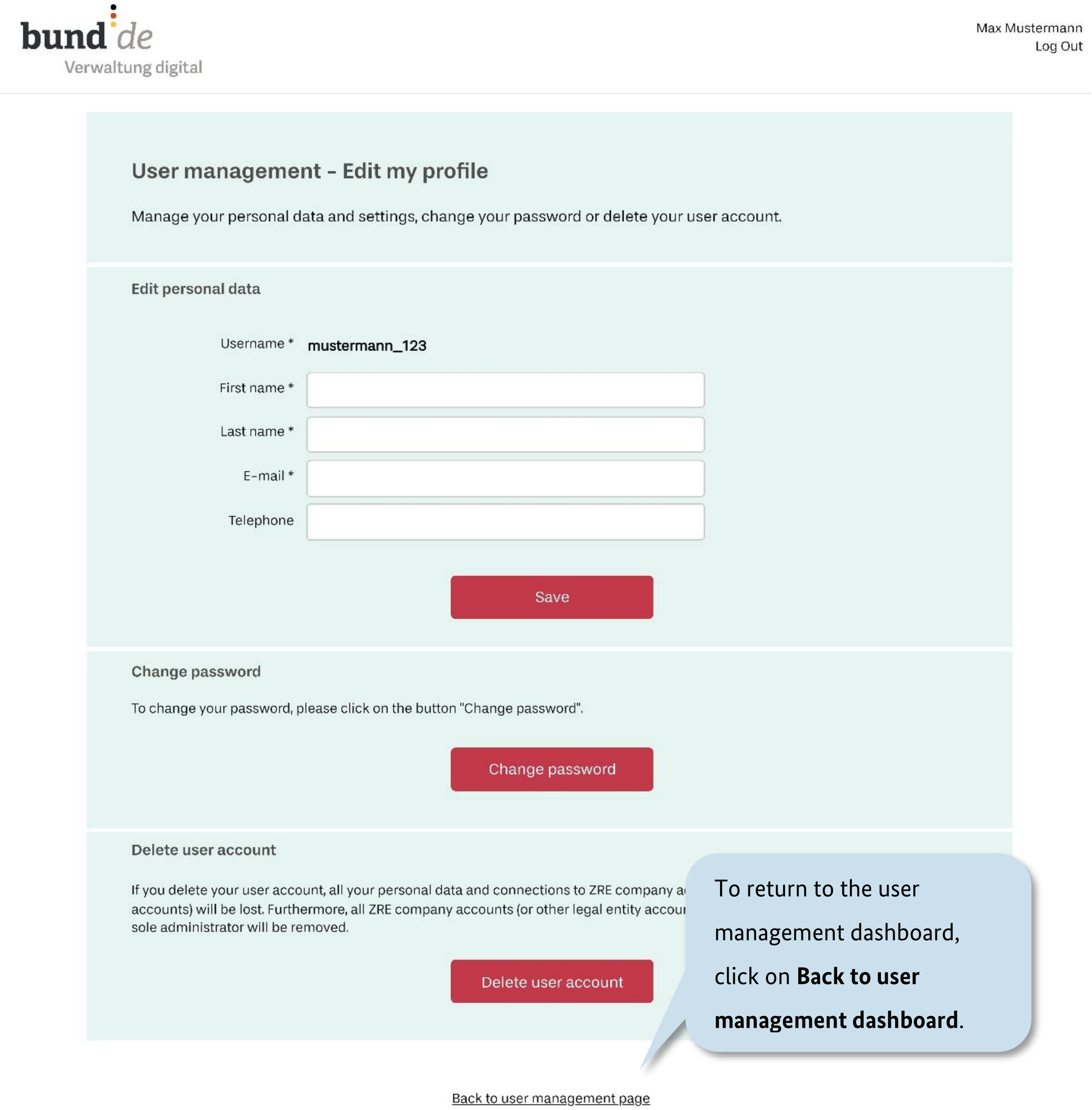

Figure 3.3 User management – Editing your user profile

3.2 Creating and registering a ZRE company account (or other legal entity account)

The second option on the user management dashboard is **Create company account**. Here you can create a ZRE account for your company or other legal entity (e.g. an association). You might need to create a ZRE account for your company if other people besides yourself will be submitting invoices for that company via the ZRE and will need access to the company account for invoice information. If this is the case, enter your company name and click **Save**.

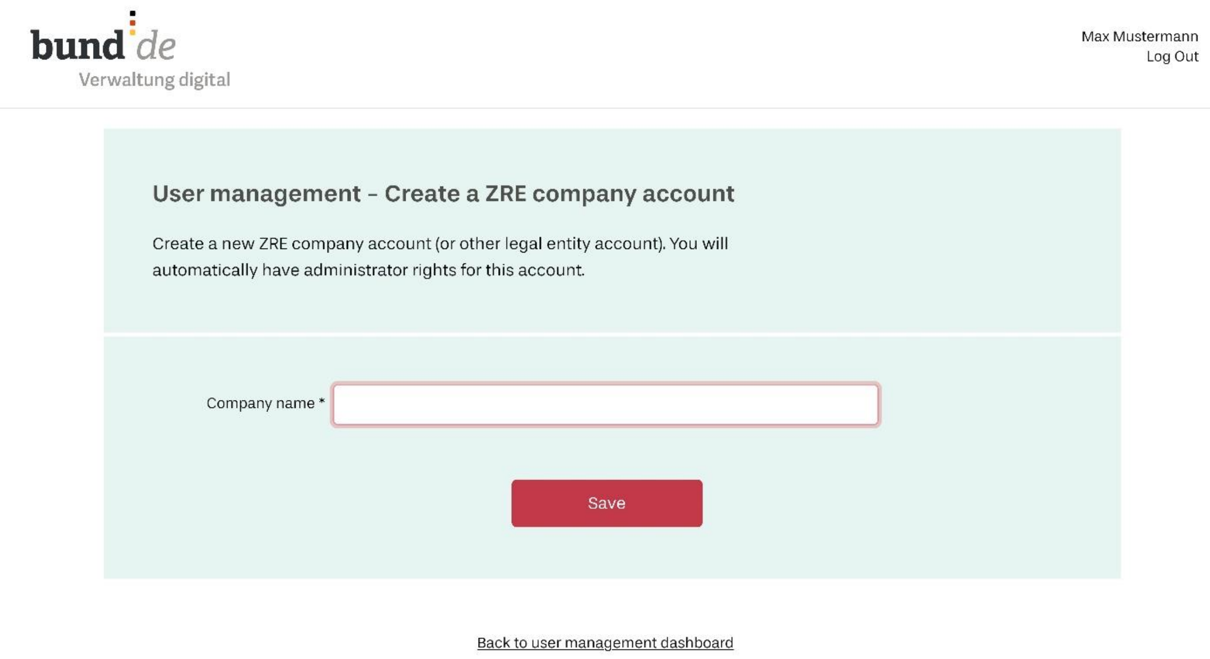

Figure 3.4 User management – Creating a company account

A window will then appear confirming that you have successfully created a ZRE account for your company (or other legal entity). Click **OK** in this window and you will return to the main menu. There, below the button for your personal account, you will see a button for the newly created company (or other legal entity) account. If your personal account is linked with more than two company accounts, you will see a drop-down menu from which to select the relevant account (see section 3.4). Before you can create and send electronic invoices from this account, you will need to register it. To do this, click on the button for the newly created company account – or select the relevant company account from the drop-down menu – and follow the instructions. You will already be familiar with the steps from having registered your personal ZRE account. They are described in section 2.2.

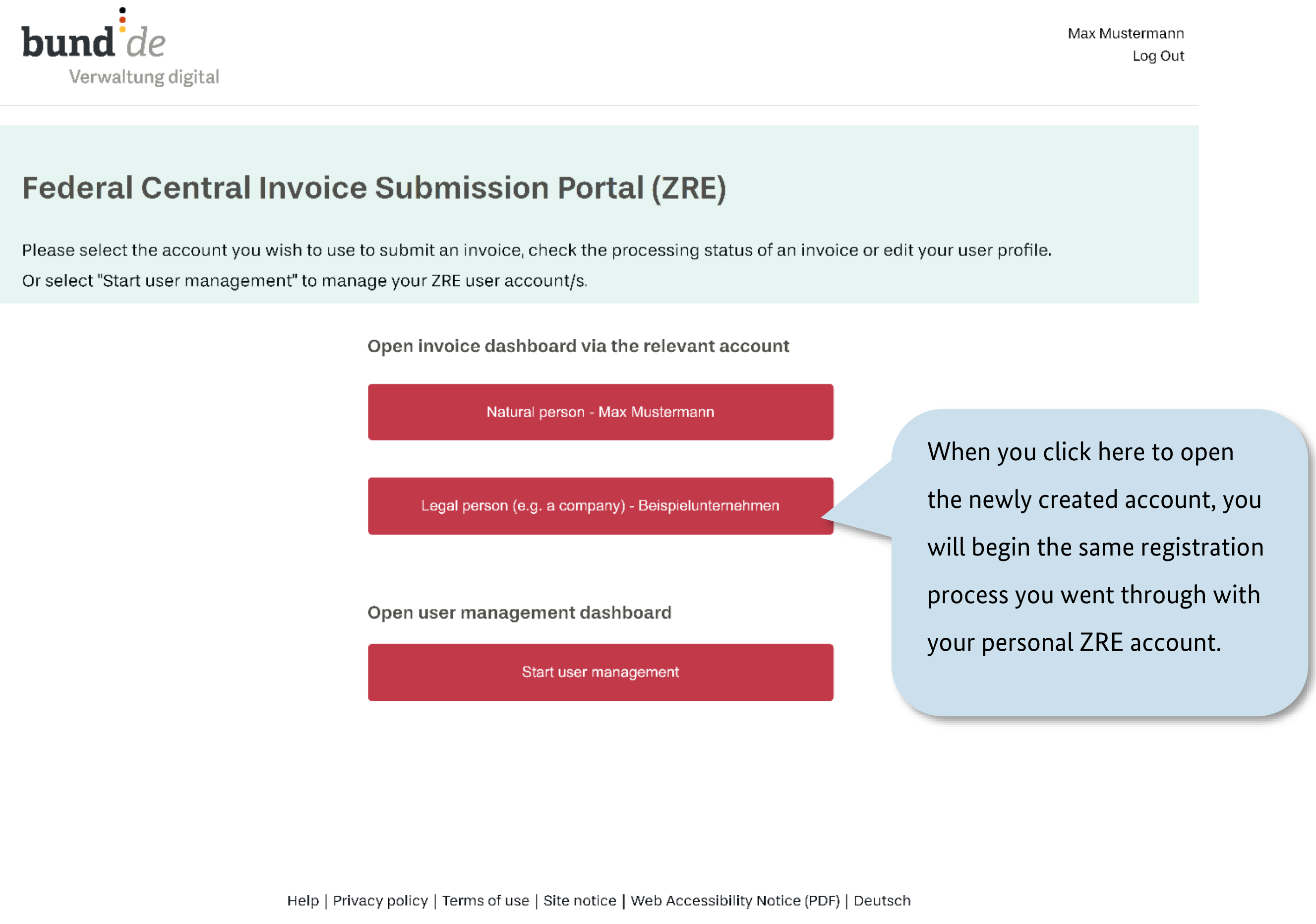

Figure 3.5 Successfully created company account

Please note that at least one person should have administrator rights for this company account so that it can be deleted if necessary. Please also bear in mind that if a user of this account leaves the company or is no longer required to work with electronic invoices, then that person should no longer have access to the account. Such users can simply be deleted from the company account.

3.3 Inviting users to join a ZRE company account (or other legal entity account)

The third option on the user management dashboard is **Invite users**. This allows you to add other users to your ZRE company account. We recommend adding several users to the account. That way, if one user is absent or leaves the company, there will still be other users to operate the company account.

To invite a new user, first select the name of the company account from the search field. A field will then appear in which you can enter the email address of the new user. You can add an unlimited number of users to the account. And you can specify which users will have administrator rights. We recommend granting several users administrator rights so that if one of them is absent or leaves the company there will still be other users who can manage the account.

When you click on **Invite user(s)**, an email is sent to the new user(s) enabling them to connect their personal ZRE account to the company account which they have been invited to join.

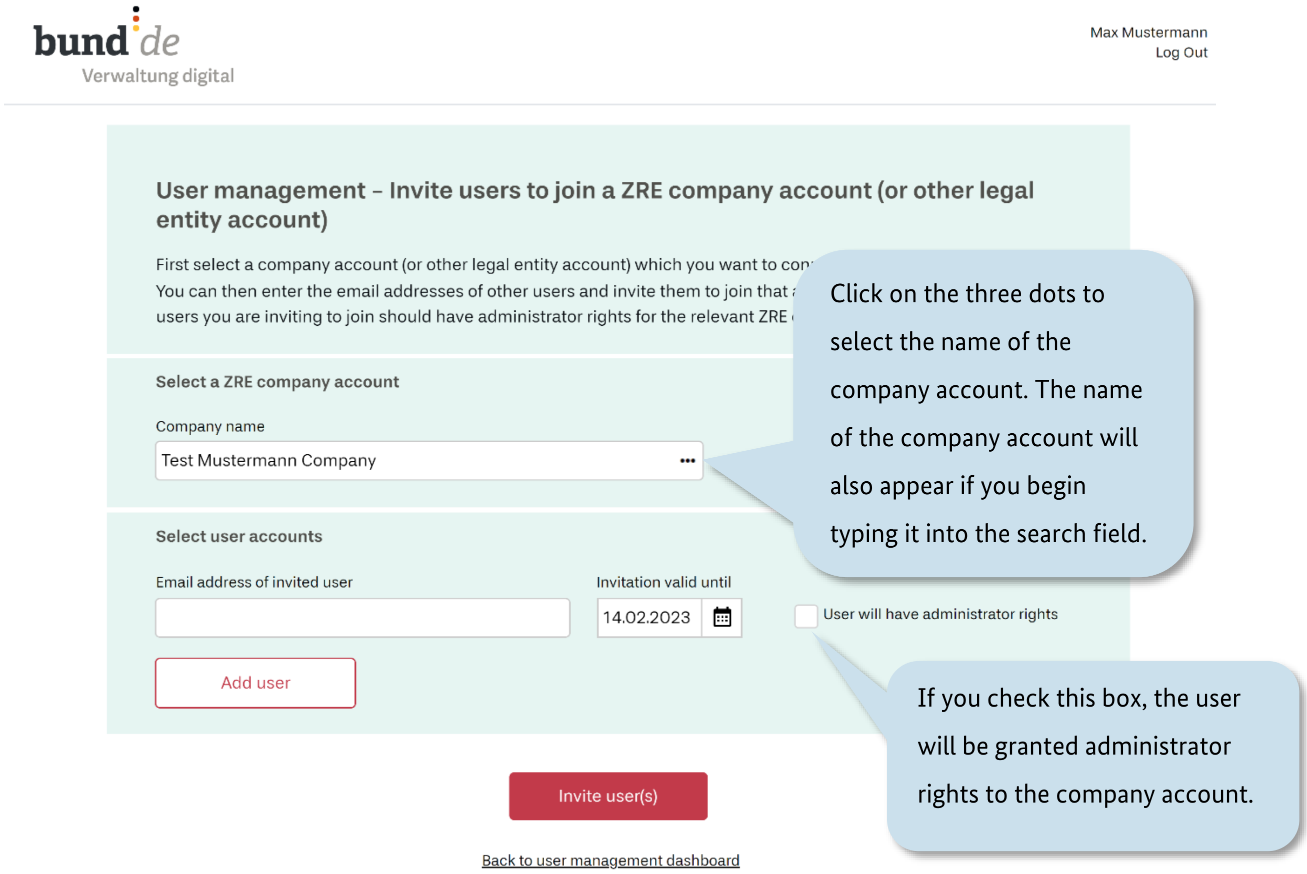

Figure 3.6 User management – Inviting other users to join a company account

3.4 Accepting an invitation to join a ZRE company account (or other legal entity account)

The fourth option on the user management dashboard is **Link user account**. The invitation email (see section 3.3) asks the user to sign in to the ZRE portal and to open the user management dashboard. Once there, the user should click the option **Link user account**, then enter the ID number from the invitation email into the field marked “ID provided in the email”. The user should then click **Connect** to link their own account with the company account in question.

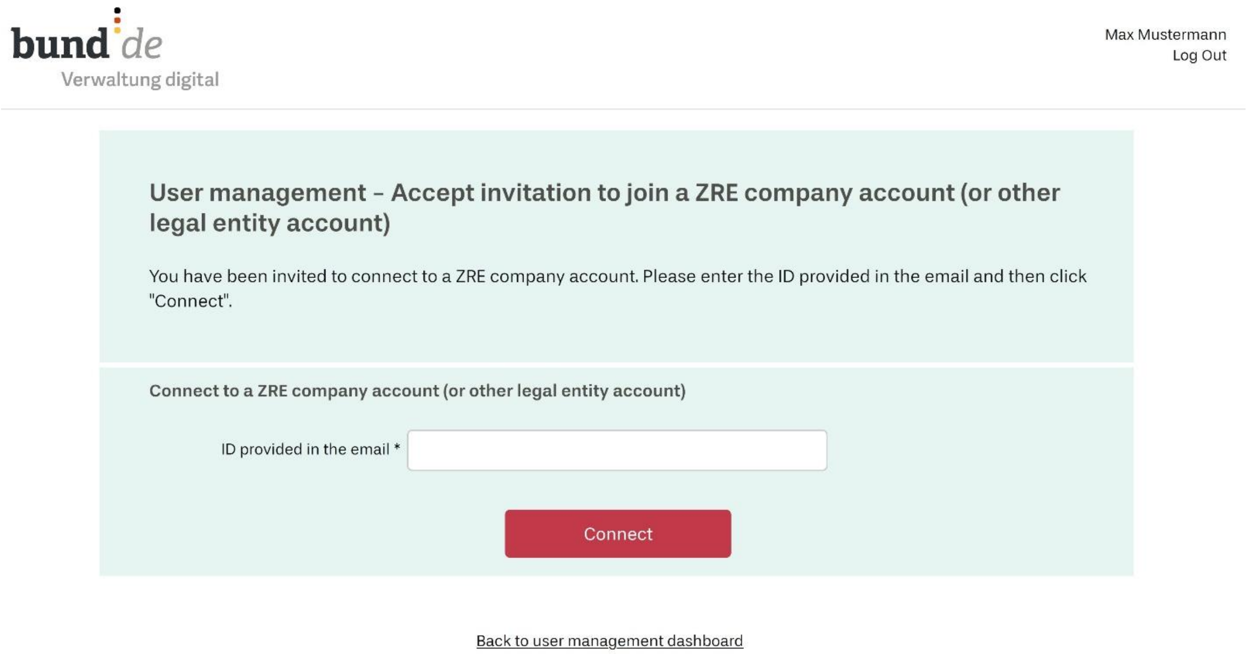

Figure 3.7 User management – Entering an ID number to connect to a company account.

A message then appears telling the user that their account was successfully linked with the company account. After clicking **OK** in this window, the user will return to the main menu. Having accepted the invitation, the user can then select the relevant company account using the corresponding button (or the drop-down menu) located below the button for their personal account. If the user is now linked with more than two company accounts, the buttons for those accounts are replaced by a drop-down menu, from which the relevant company account must be selected. This menu lists all the company accounts (or other legal entity accounts) with which the user's account is linked. To select the relevant account, the user must first open the menu by clicking on the ▼ symbol.

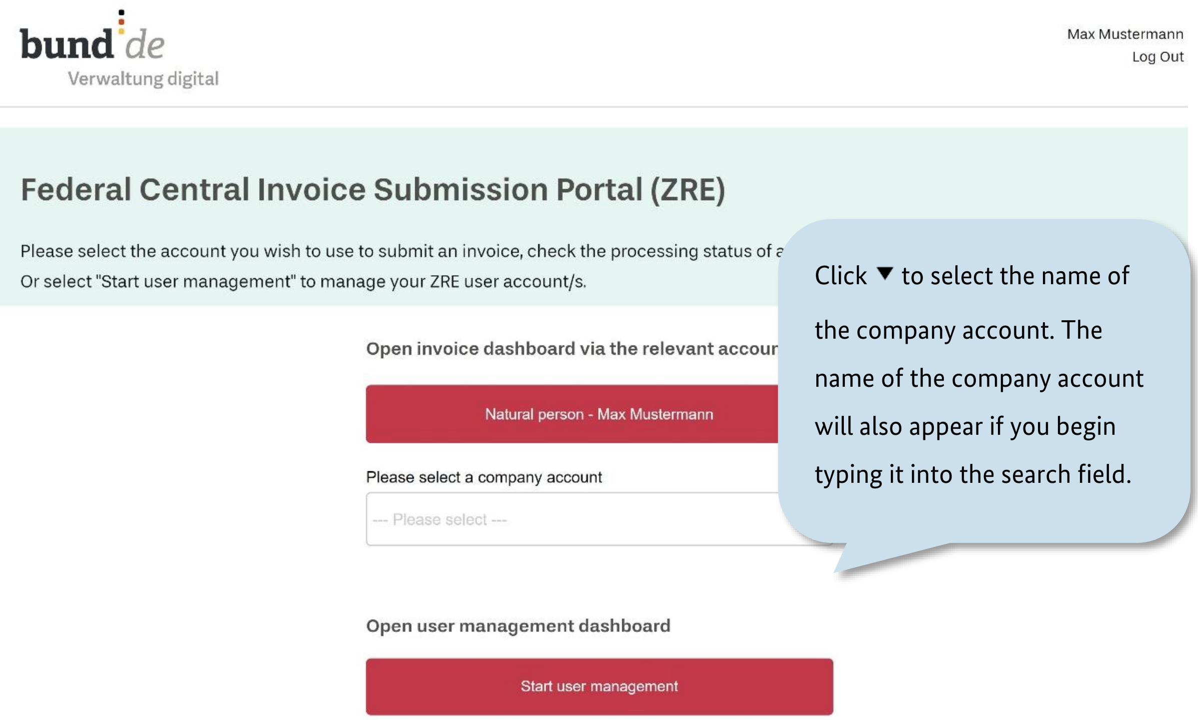

Figure 3.8 Selecting a company account

The user then clicks on the selected company account. This opens the invoice dashboard for that account (see section 4).

3.5 Managing a ZRE company account (or other legal entity account)

The fifth option on the user management dashboard is **Manage company account**. When you click on this option, the following page will open:

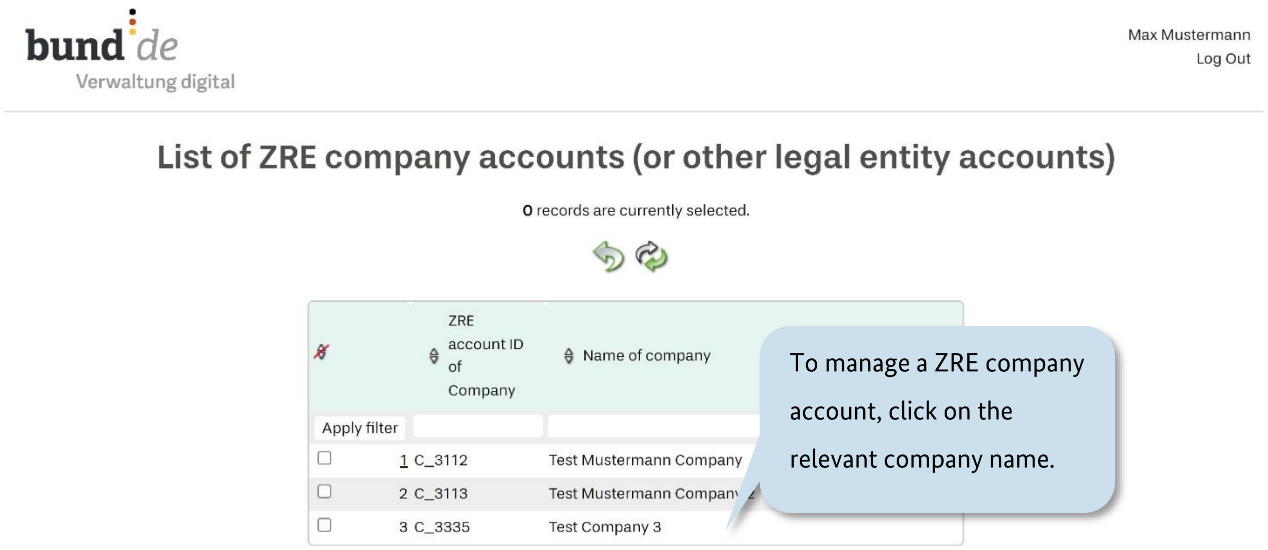

Figure 3.9 User management – Managing a company account

When you click on the relevant company name, the following page will open:

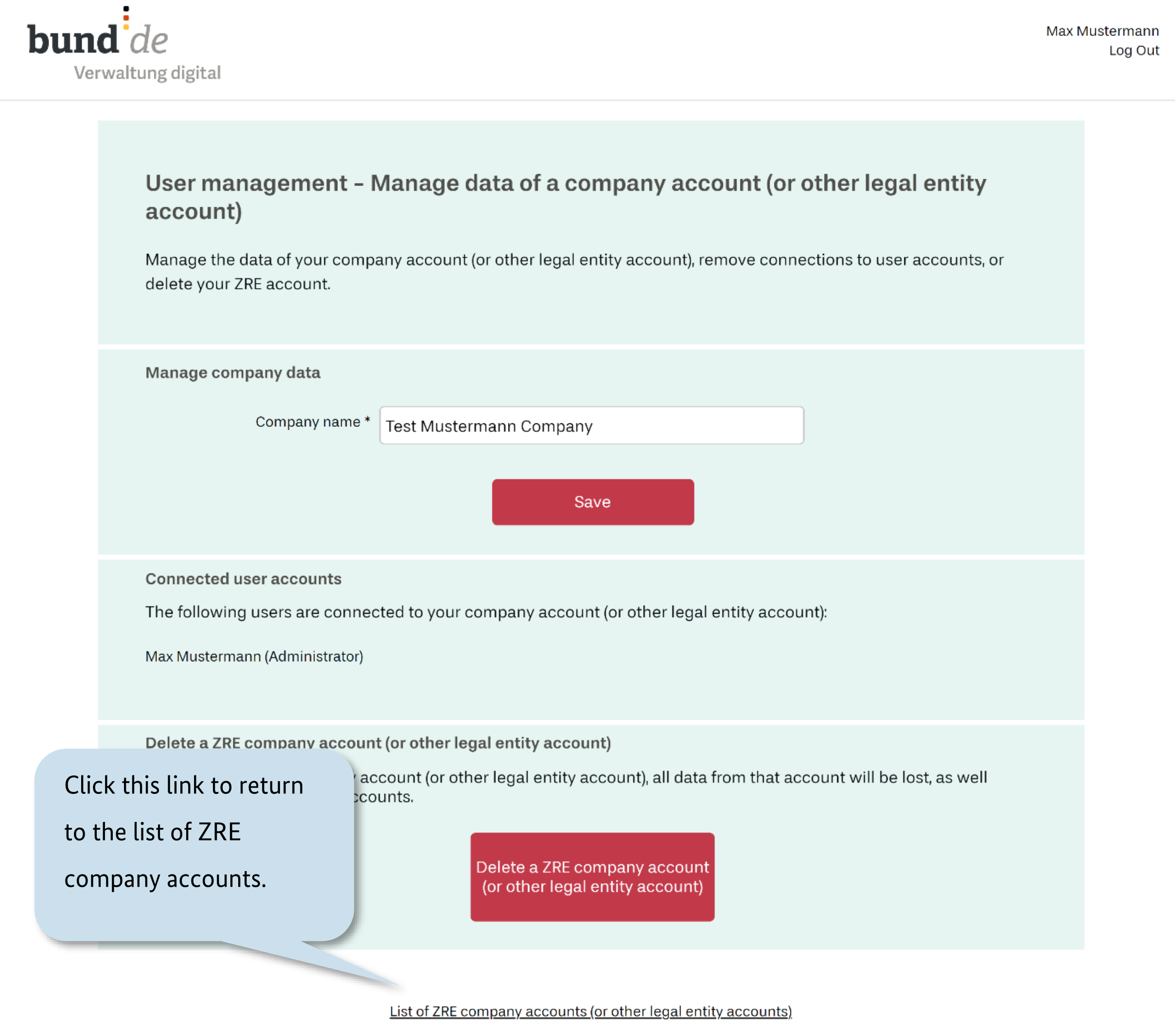

Figure 3.10 User management – Editing a company account

On this page you can change the company name. If you want to delete the ZRE company account (or other legal entity account), you can do so by clicking the corresponding button. In order to delete it successfully, you need to have first deleted the relevant company account (or other legal entity account) in the user profile of that account. How to delete a ZRE account is explained in section 9.

To return to the user management dashboard, first click on the link that reads “List of ZRE company accounts (or other legal entity accounts)”; and on the next page, click the symbol.

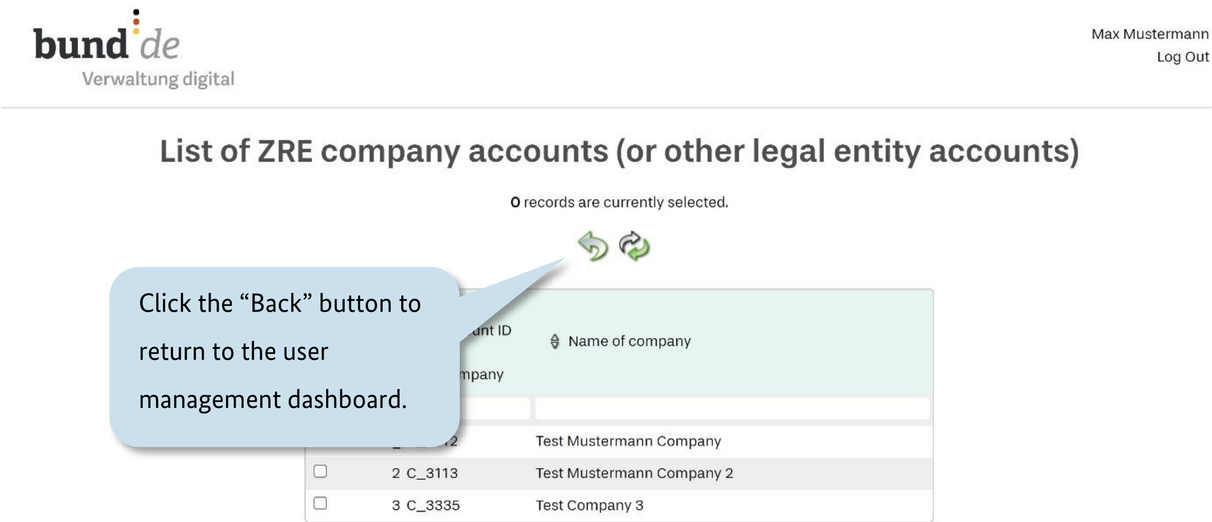

Figure 3.11 User management – List of ZRE company accounts

4 Creating invoices

Create invoice is one of the options presented by the invoice dashboard of the ZRE portal. The invoice dashboard is the first page that opens when you select a user account from the main menu. It provides four options for creating or submitting invoices.

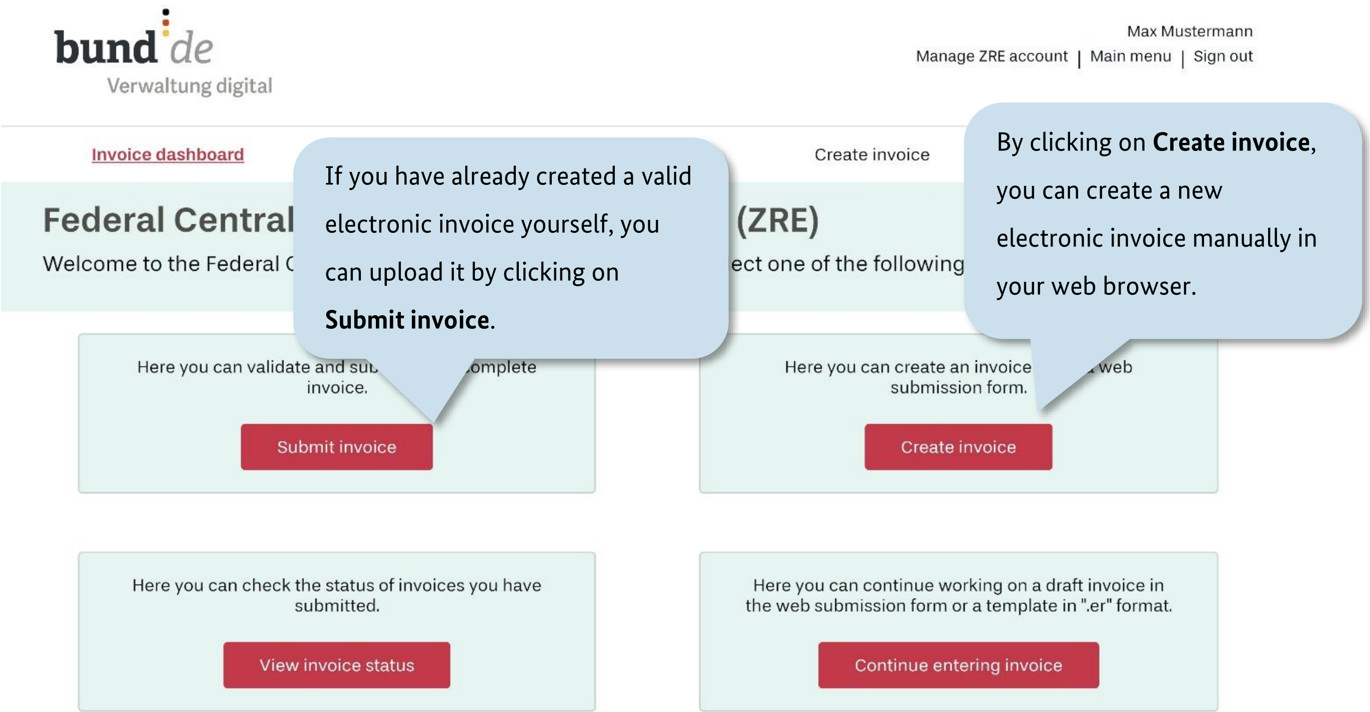

Figure 4.1 Invoice dashboard of the ZRE portal

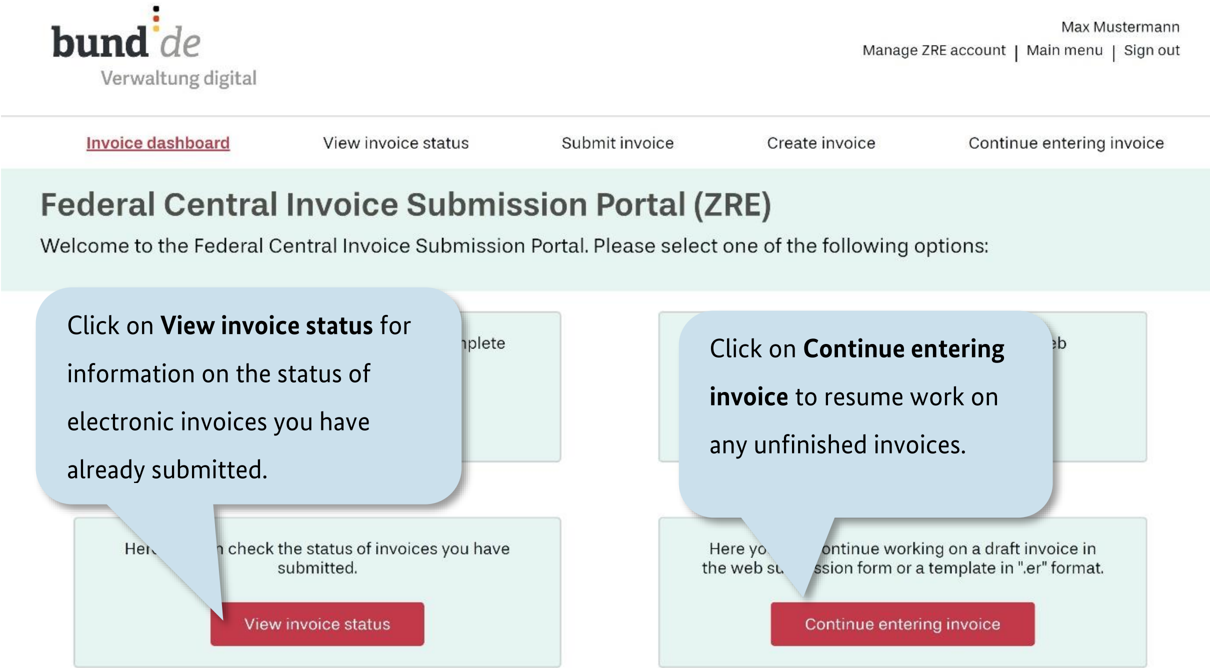

Figure 4.2 Invoice dashboard of the ZRE portal

Clicking on **Create invoice** takes you to the first step in the invoice creation process. At the top of the page is a navigation bar showing all nine steps involved in the process (see figure 4.3). You can save the invoice at any time during the process and upload it again later to continue working on it (see section 5).

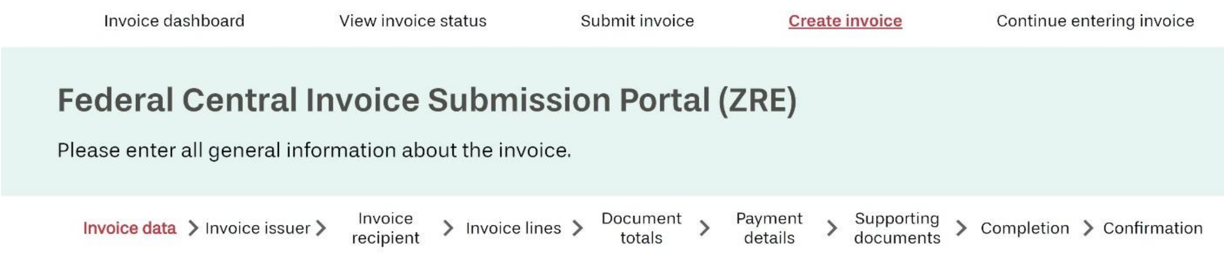

Figure 4.3 Creating invoices – The nine steps of the invoice creation process

General note on the invoice creation process

The following sections explain the nine steps of the invoice creation process. In each step, items marked with an asterisk (*) are required and must be filled in to complete the invoice.

4.1 Invoice data

On the first page, titled **Invoice data**, you can enter key data for your invoice.

(For better readability, the "Invoice data" page is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled "I" and "II" in the figure captions. There is also a third screenshot showing a pop-up window.)

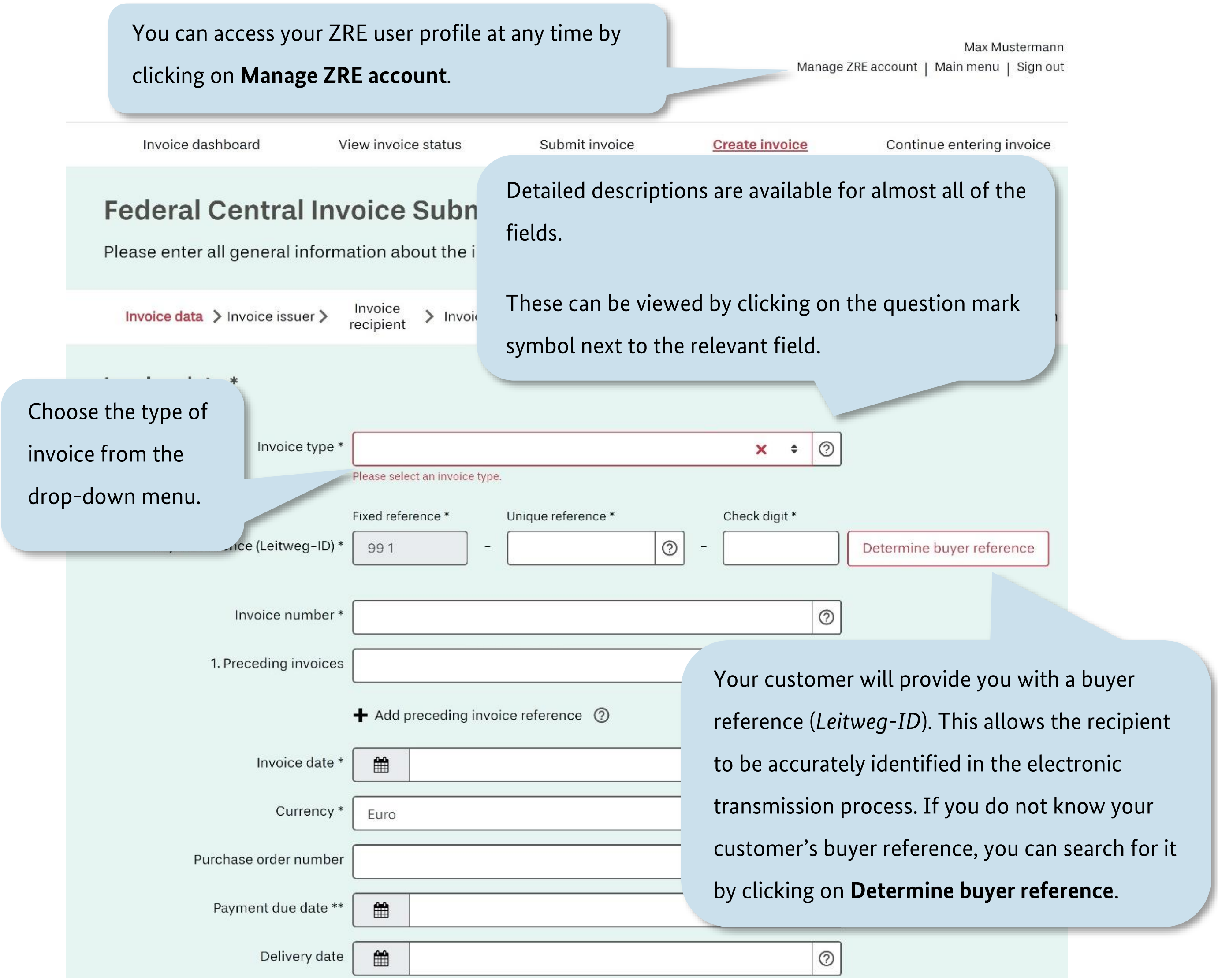

Figure 4.4 Creating invoices – The "Invoice data" page (I/II)

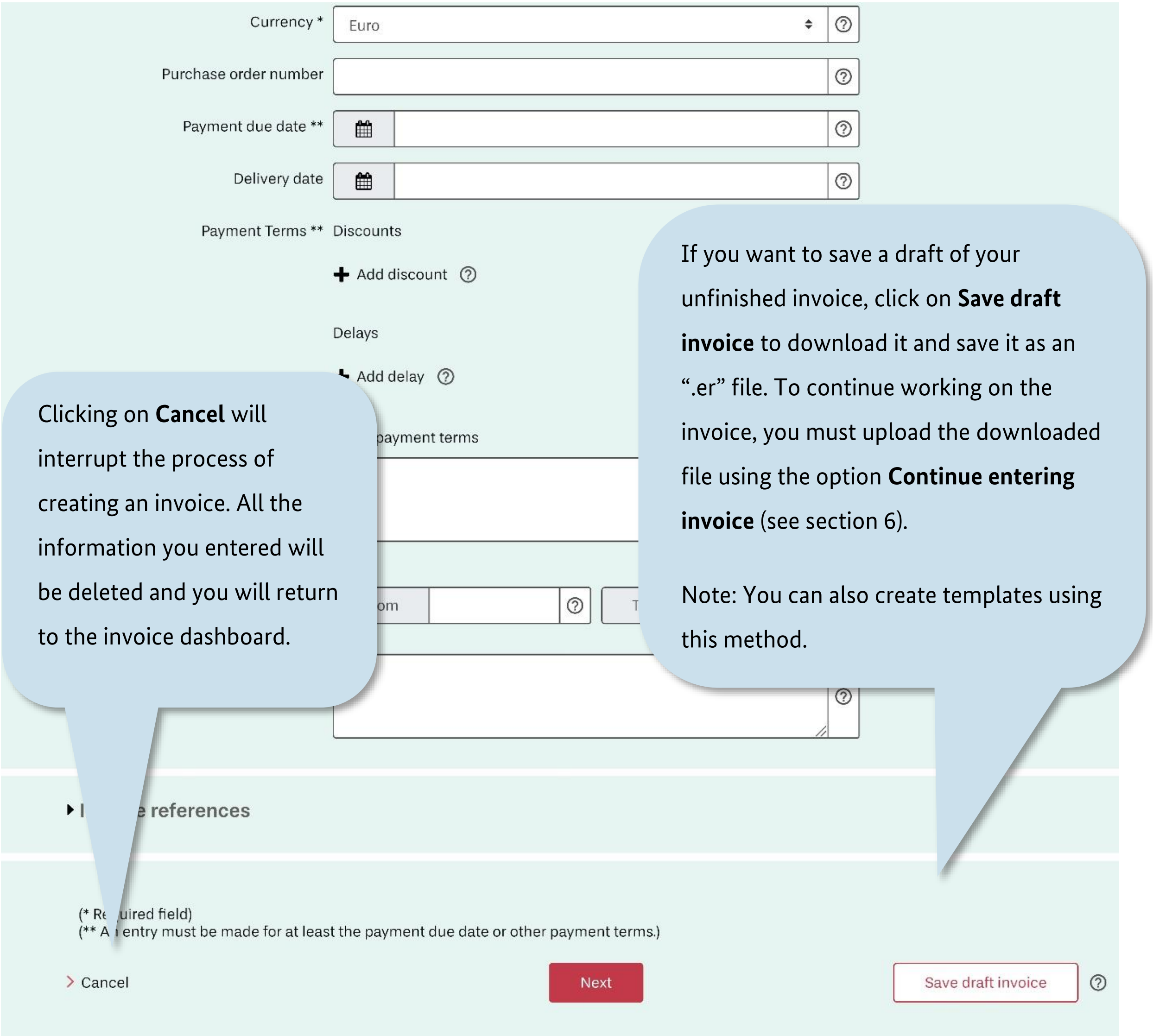

Figure 4.5 Creating invoices – The "Invoice data" page (II/II)

If you do not know your customer's buyer reference (*Leitweg-ID*), you can search for it by clicking on **Determine buyer reference** (see figure 4.4). A pop-up window will open allowing you to search by "Invoice recipient", "Unique reference" or "Organisation". Alternatively, ask your customer directly about which buyer reference to use.

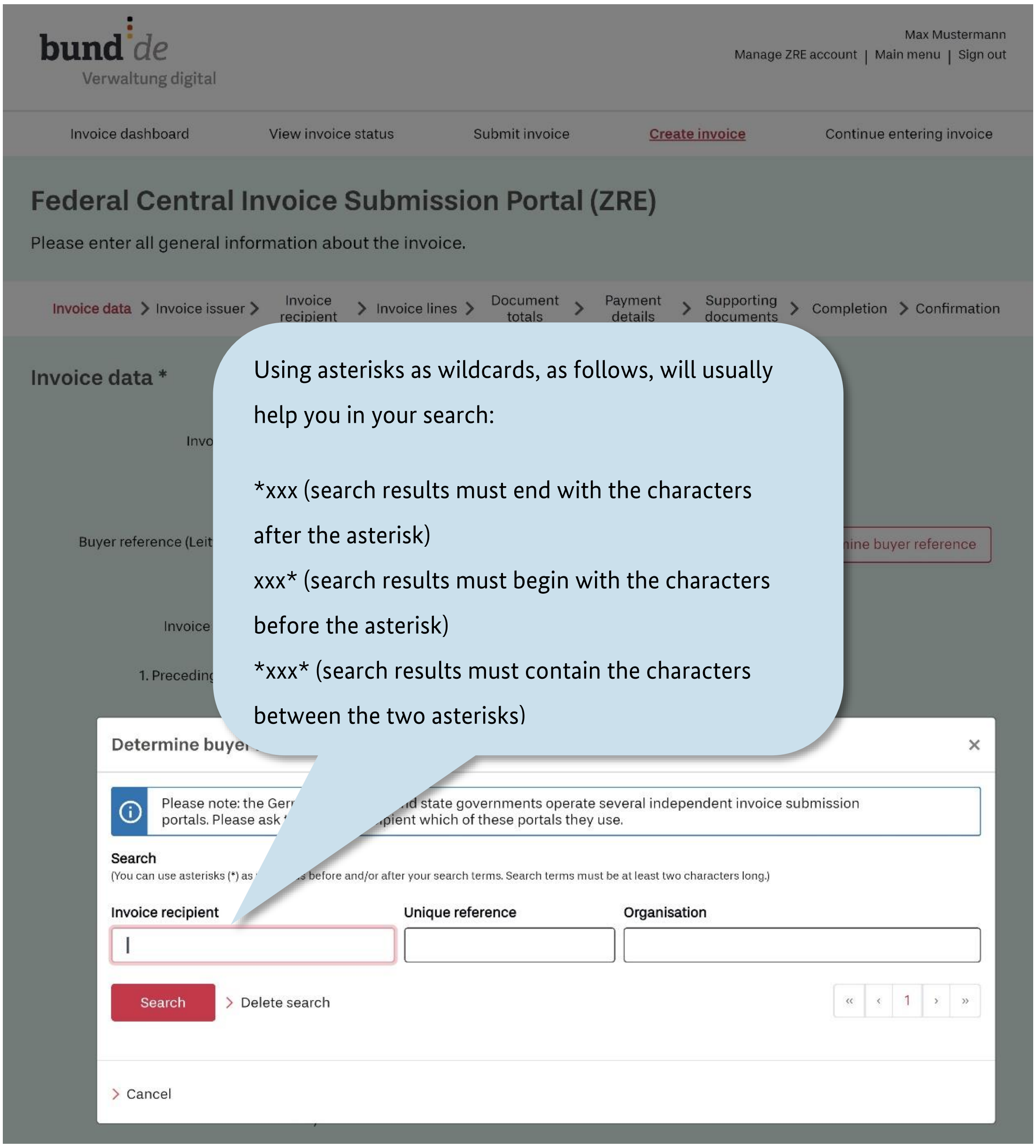

Figure 4.6 Creating invoices – Finding the buyer reference via the "Invoice data" page

Because you can only send invoices via the ZRE to recipients whose buyer reference begins with “991”, that fixed reference number is already entered on the form.

After you have entered the recipient’s buyer reference, you can continue entering invoice data and/or proceed with the next steps in the invoice creation process.

(Once again, the "Invoice data" page is shown using multiple screenshots. Again, these are labelled "I" and "II" in the figure captions.)

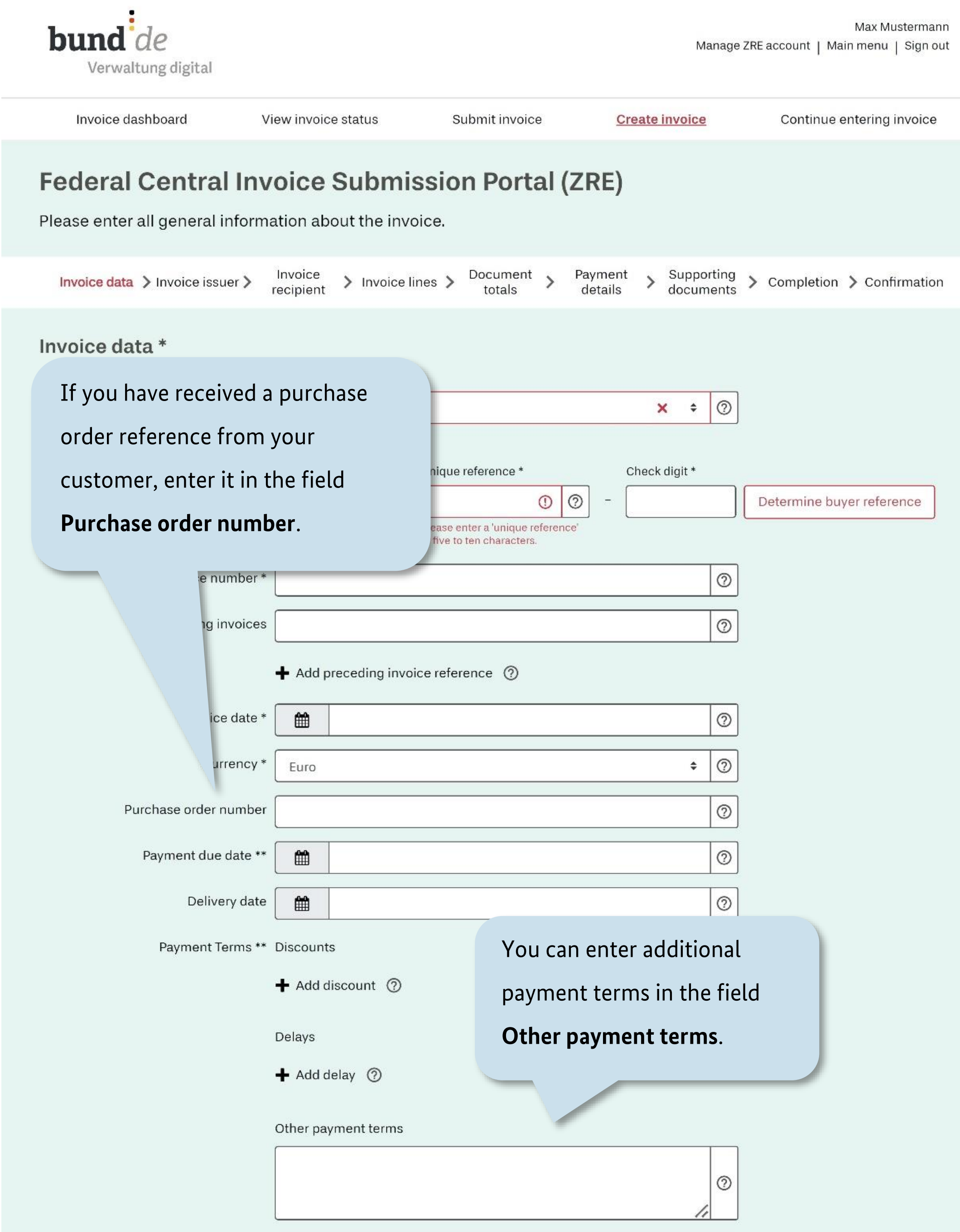

Figure 4.7 Creating invoices – The "Invoice data" page (I/II)

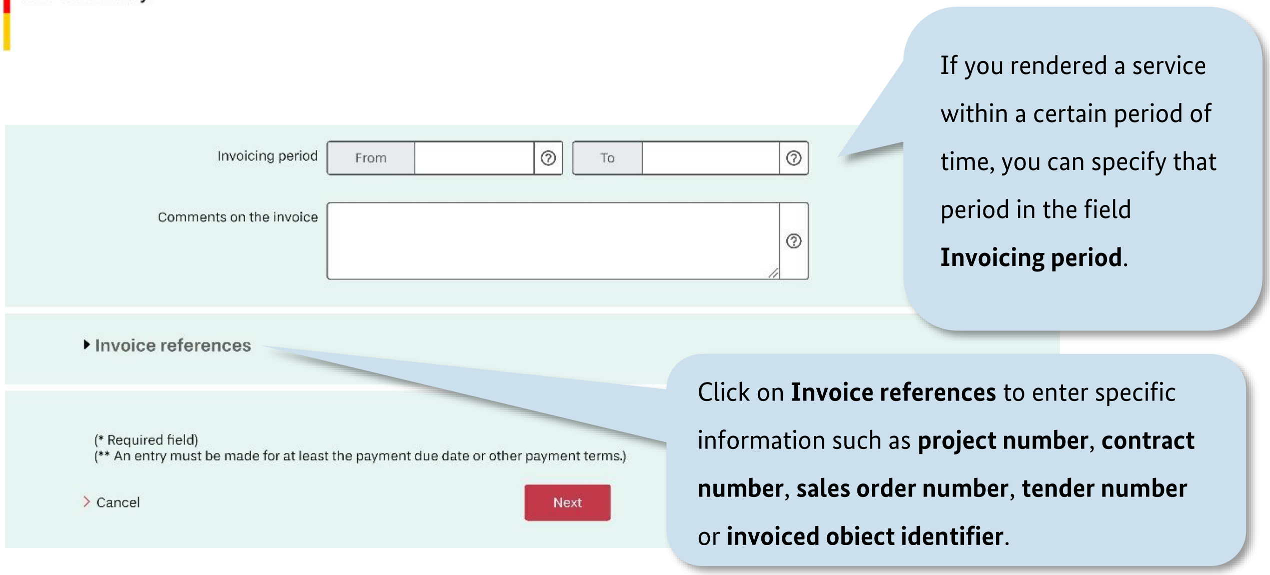

Figure 4.8 Creating invoices – The "Invoice data" page (II/II)

4.2 Invoice issuer

On the second page, titled **Invoice issuer**, you can enter your information, postal address and contact details.

(The “Invoice issuer” page is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled “I”, “II” and “III” in the figure captions. There is also a fourth screenshot showing a pop-up window.)

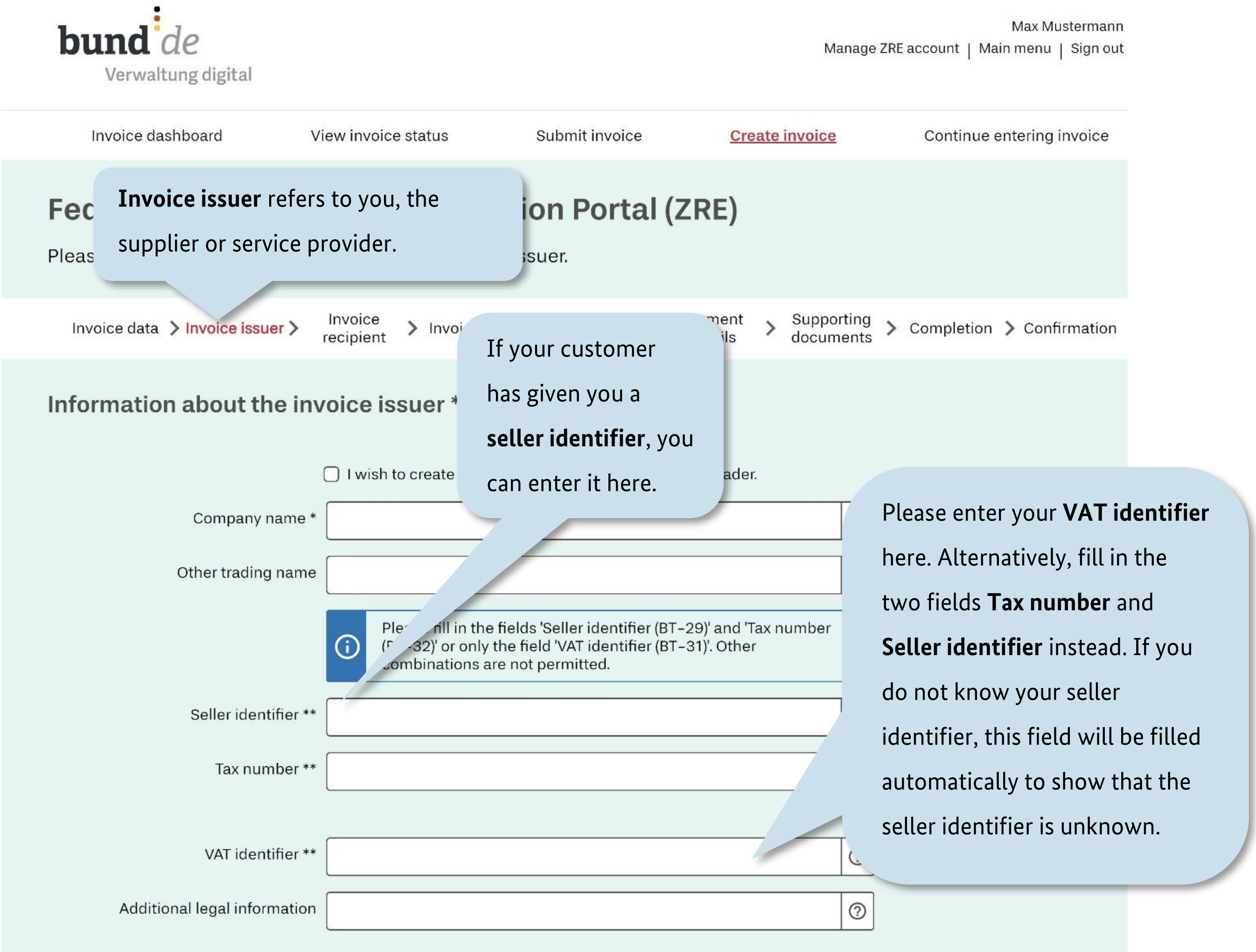

Figure 4.9 Creating invoices – The “Invoice issuer” page (I/III)

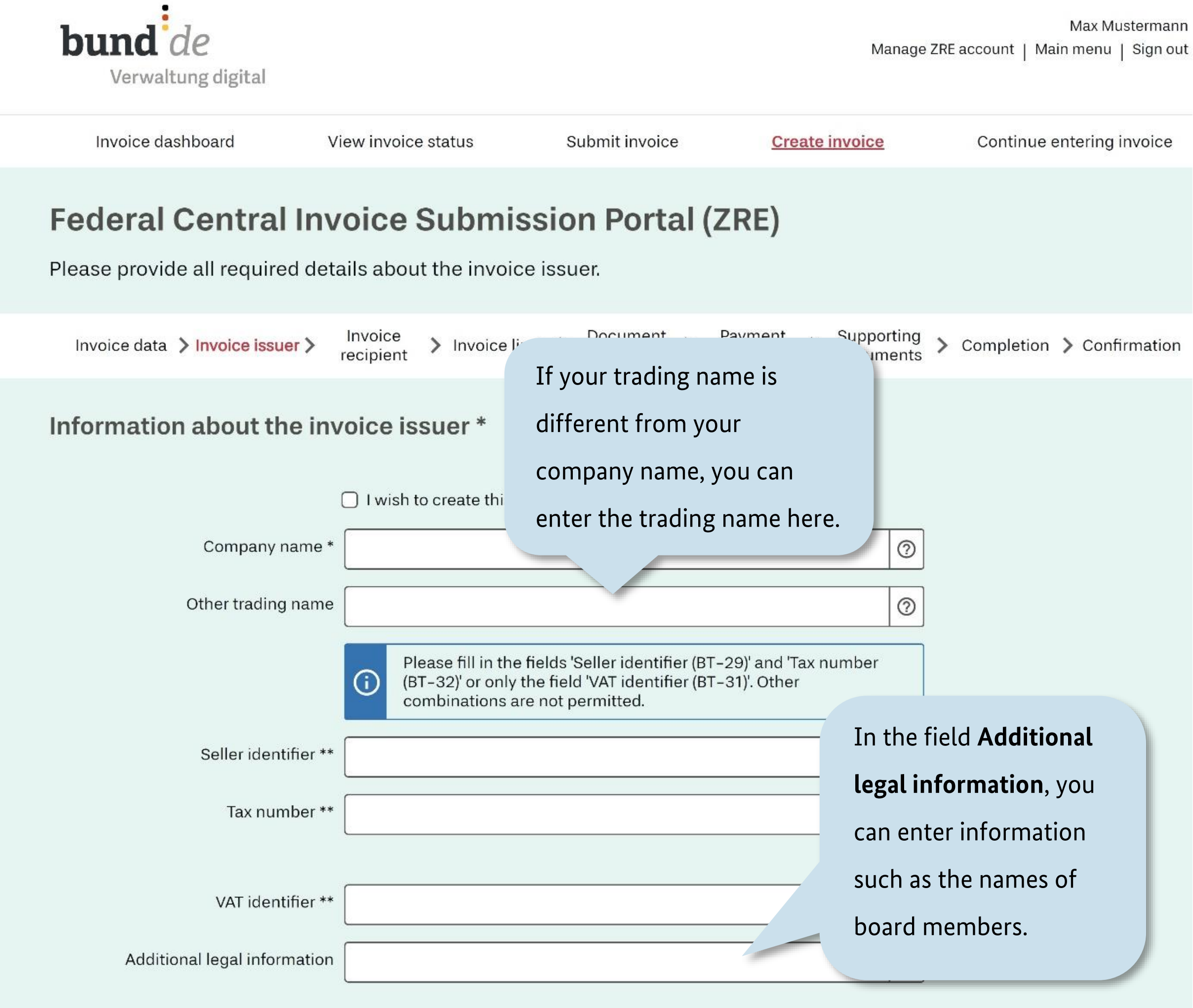

Figure 4.10 Creating invoices – The “Invoice issuer” page (II/III)

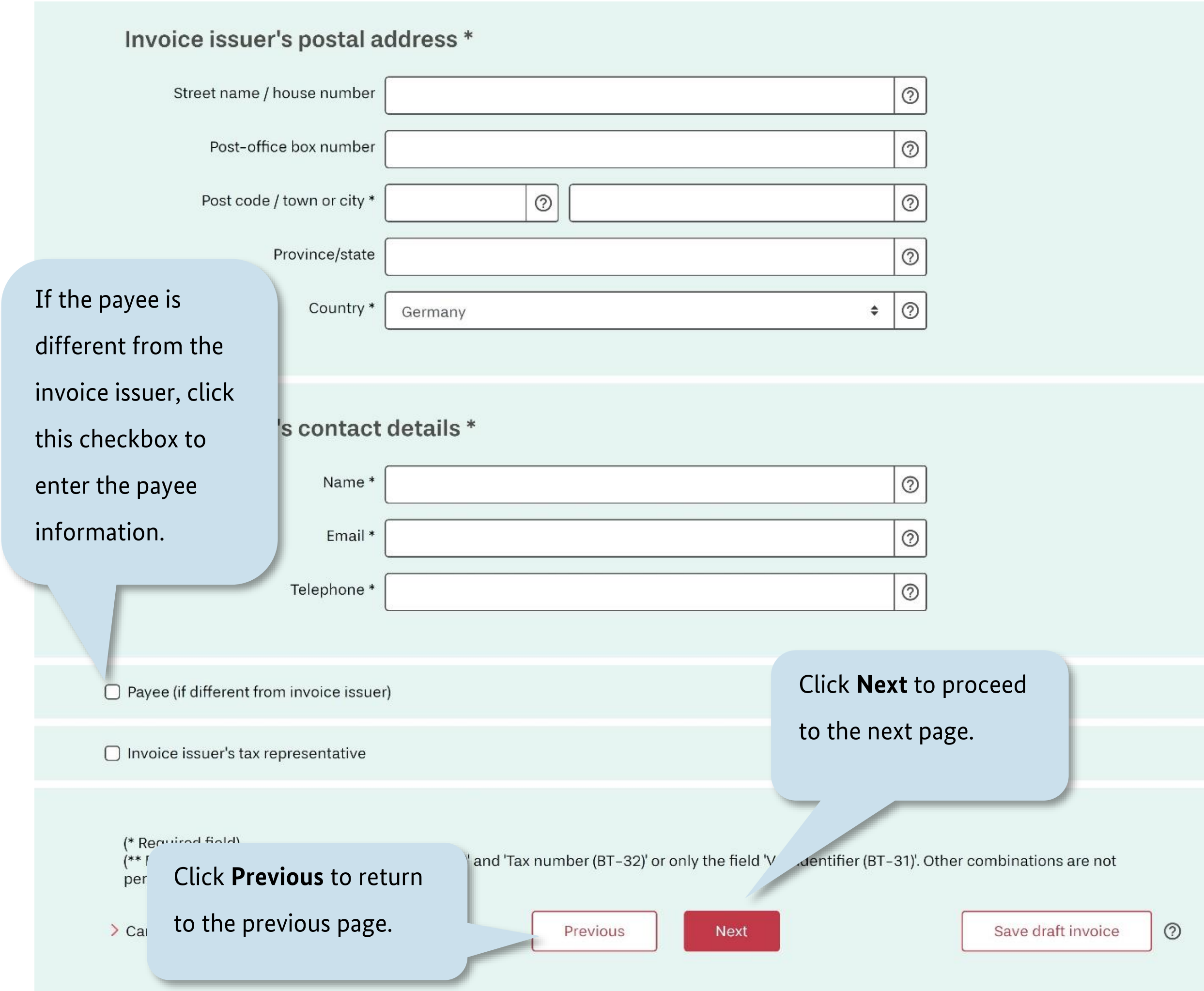

Figure 4.11 Creating invoices – The “Invoice issuer” page (III/III)

If a validation error is detected while you are creating an invoice (e.g. if a required field has not been filled in), you will be notified of this as soon as you attempt to leave the current step in the invoice creation process (see figure 4.12).

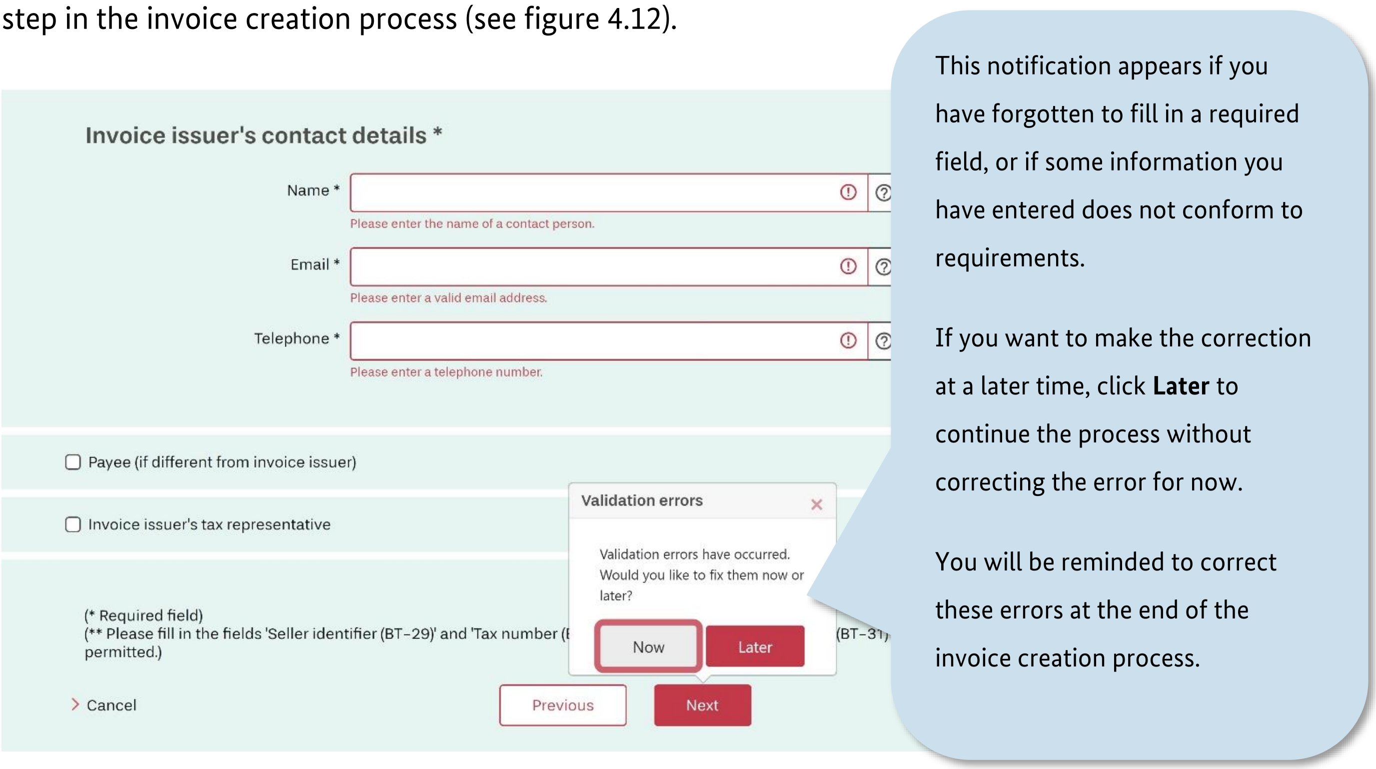

Figure 4.12 Creating invoices – Example of a validation error on the “Invoice issuer” page

4.3 Invoice recipient

On the third page, titled **Invoice recipient**, you can enter details about your customer.

(For better readability, the "Invoice recipient" page is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled "I" and "II" in the figure captions.)

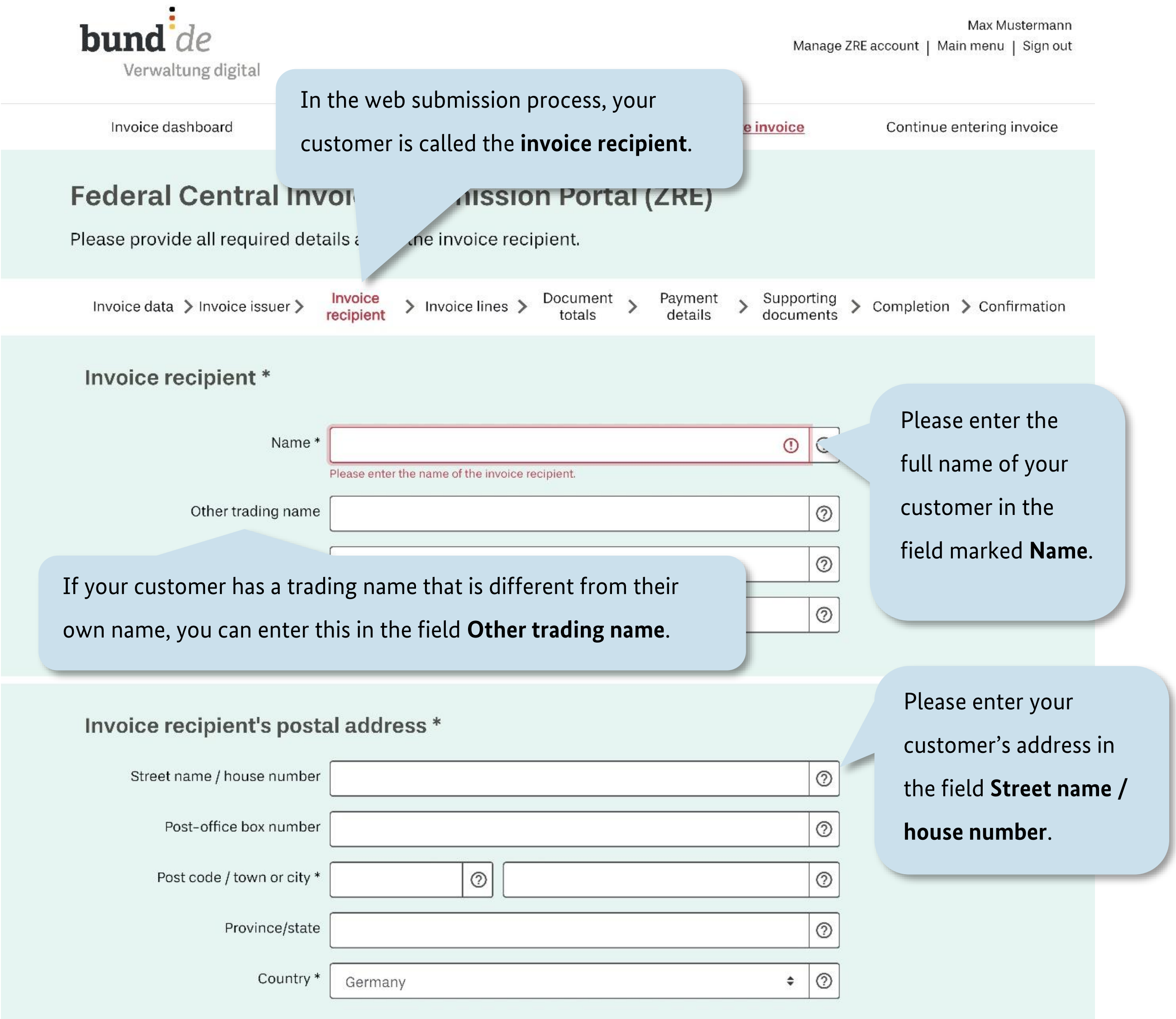

Figure 4.13 Creating invoices – The "Invoice recipient" page (I/II)

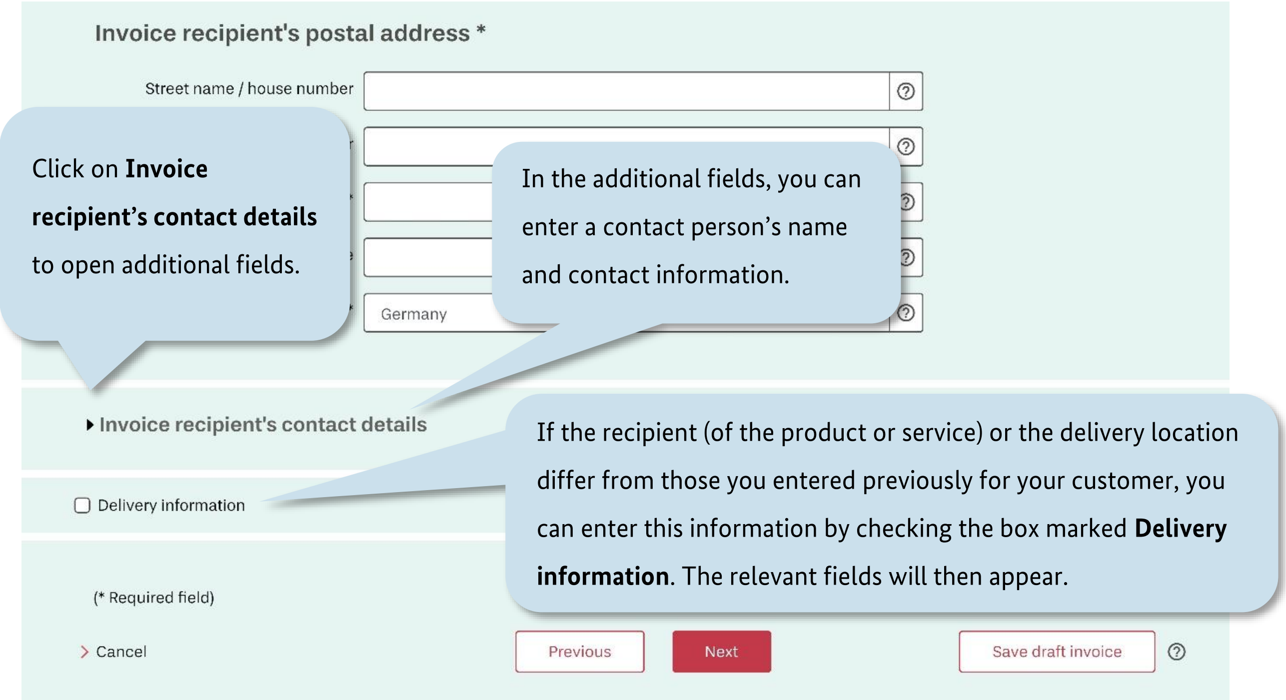

Figure 4.14 Creating invoices – The "Invoice recipient" page (II/II)

4.4 Invoice lines

On the fourth page, titled **Invoice lines**, you can add line items to your invoice.

(For better readability, the "Invoice lines" page is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled "I" and "II" in the figure captions.)

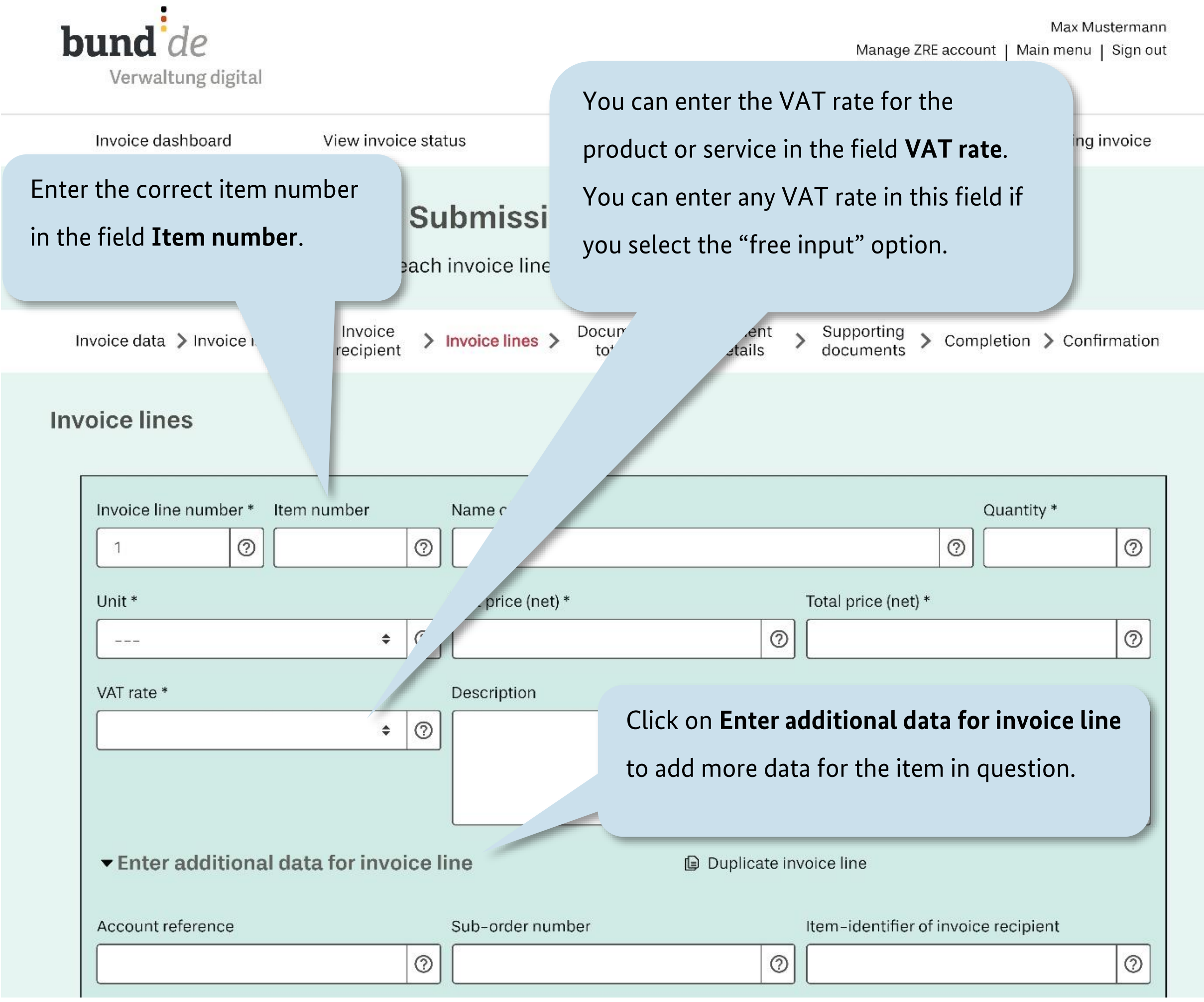

Figure 4.15 Creating invoices – The "Invoice lines" page (I/II)

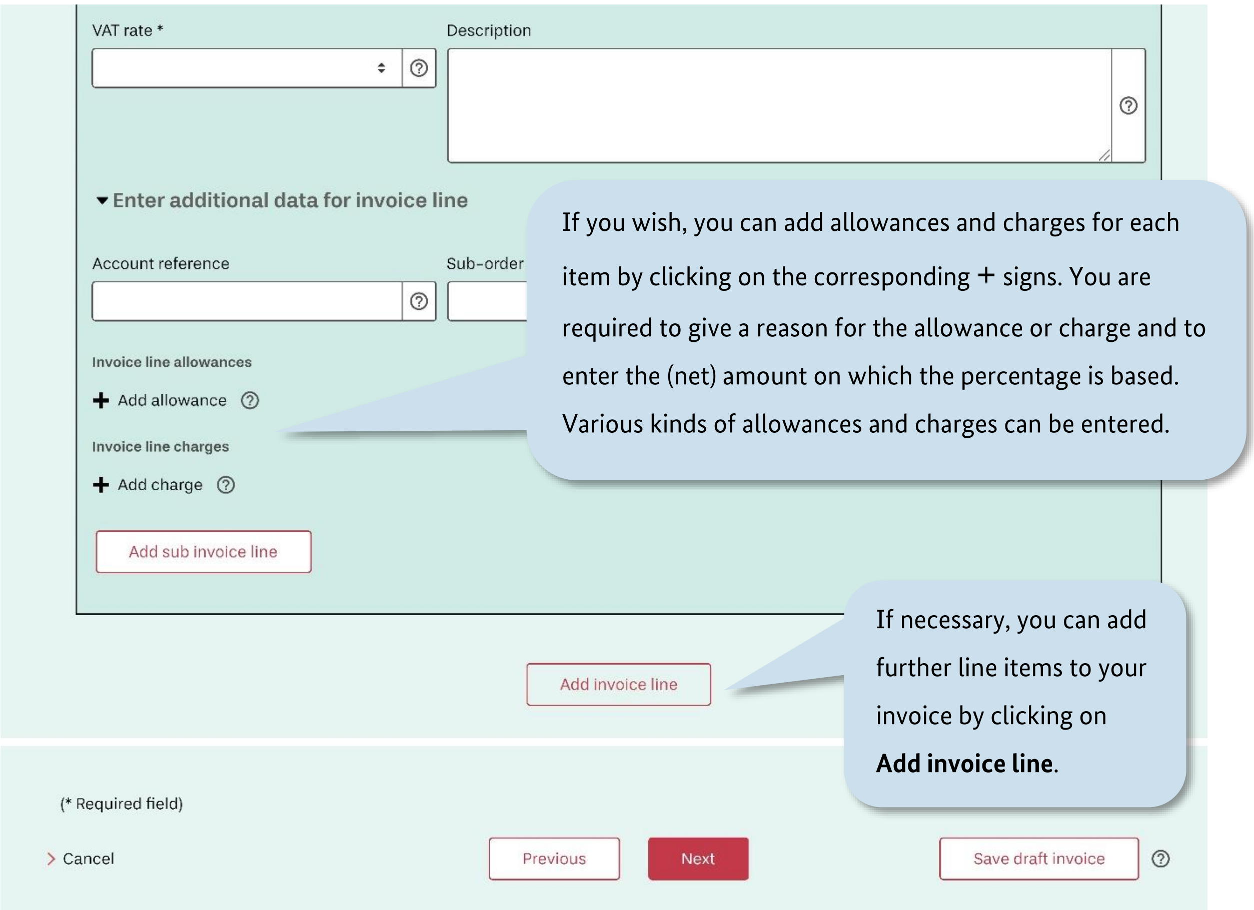

Figure 4.16 Creating invoices – The “Invoice lines” page (II/II)

4.5 Document totals

On the fifth page, titled **Document totals**, the amounts from each invoice line item (entered on the previous page) are added together. The total amounts are displayed and summarised according to their VAT rate. You can also add allowances and charges to the invoice as a whole.

(For better readability, the "Document totals" page is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled "I", "II" and "III" in the figure captions.)

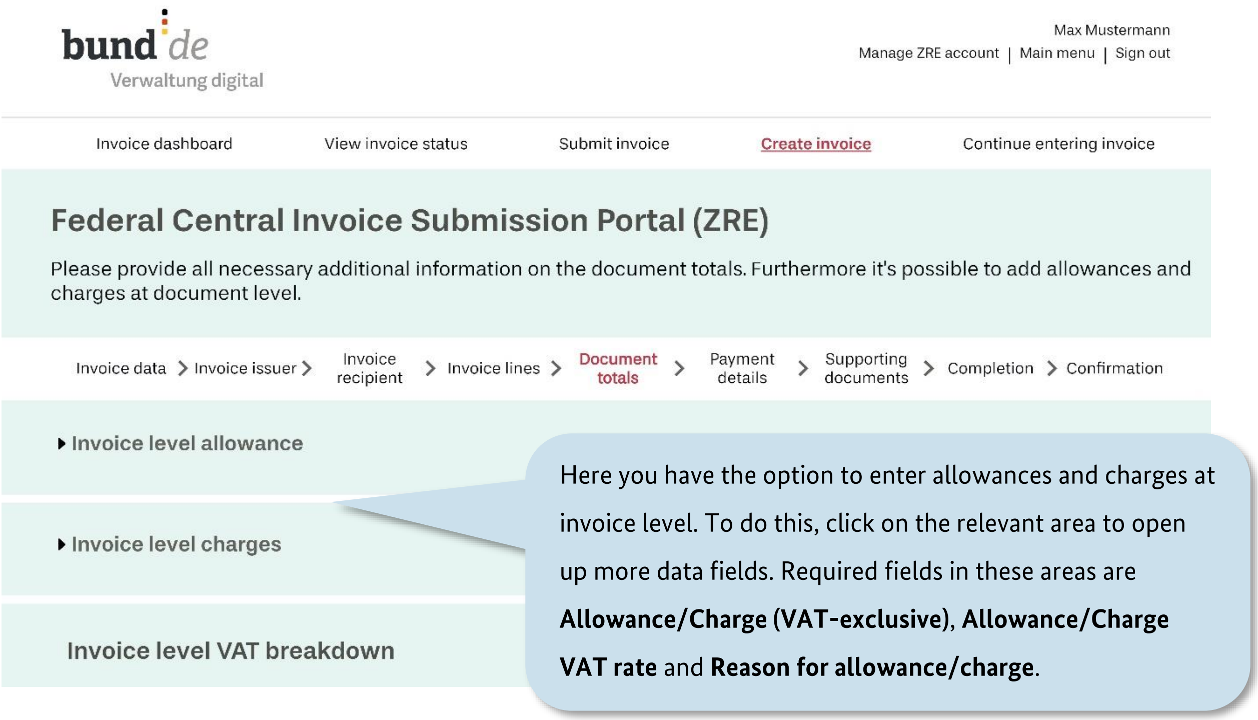

Figure 4.17 Creating invoices – The "Document totals" page (I/III)

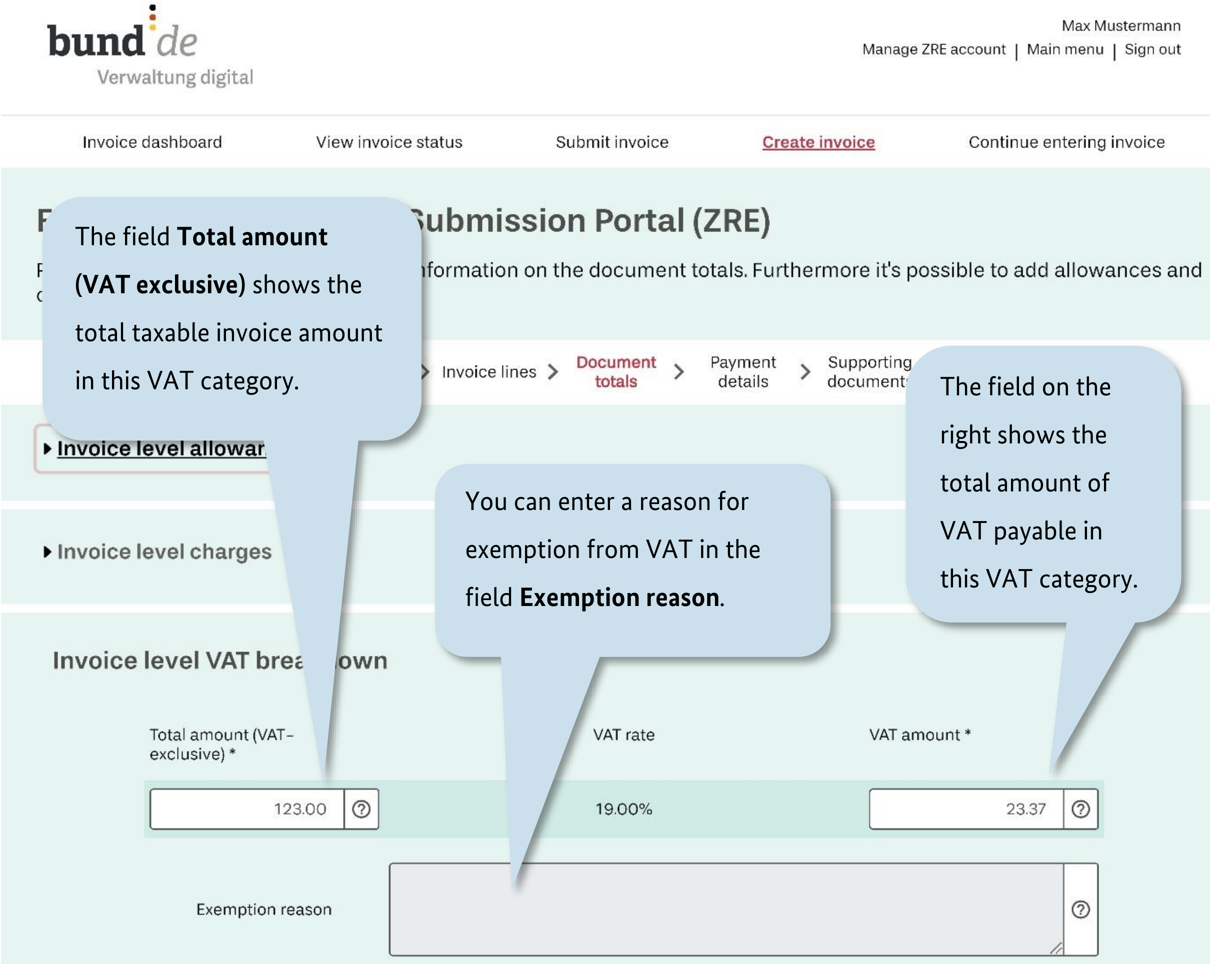

Figure 4.18 Creating invoices – The “Document totals” page (II/III)

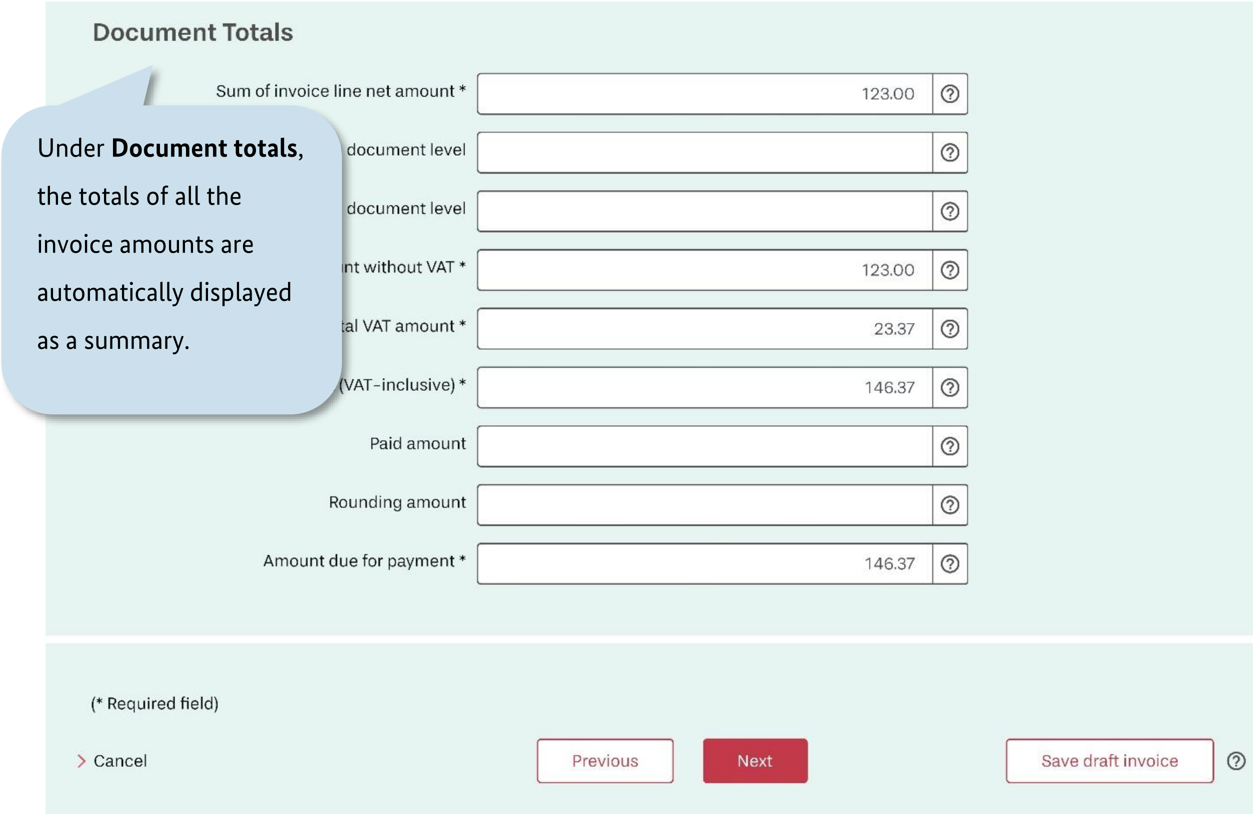

Figure 4.19 Creating invoices – The “Document totals” page (III/III)

4.6 Payment details

On the sixth page, titled **Payment details**, you can enter the information required for your customer to transfer the payment due.

(For better readability, the "Payment details" page is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled "I" and "II" in the figure captions.)

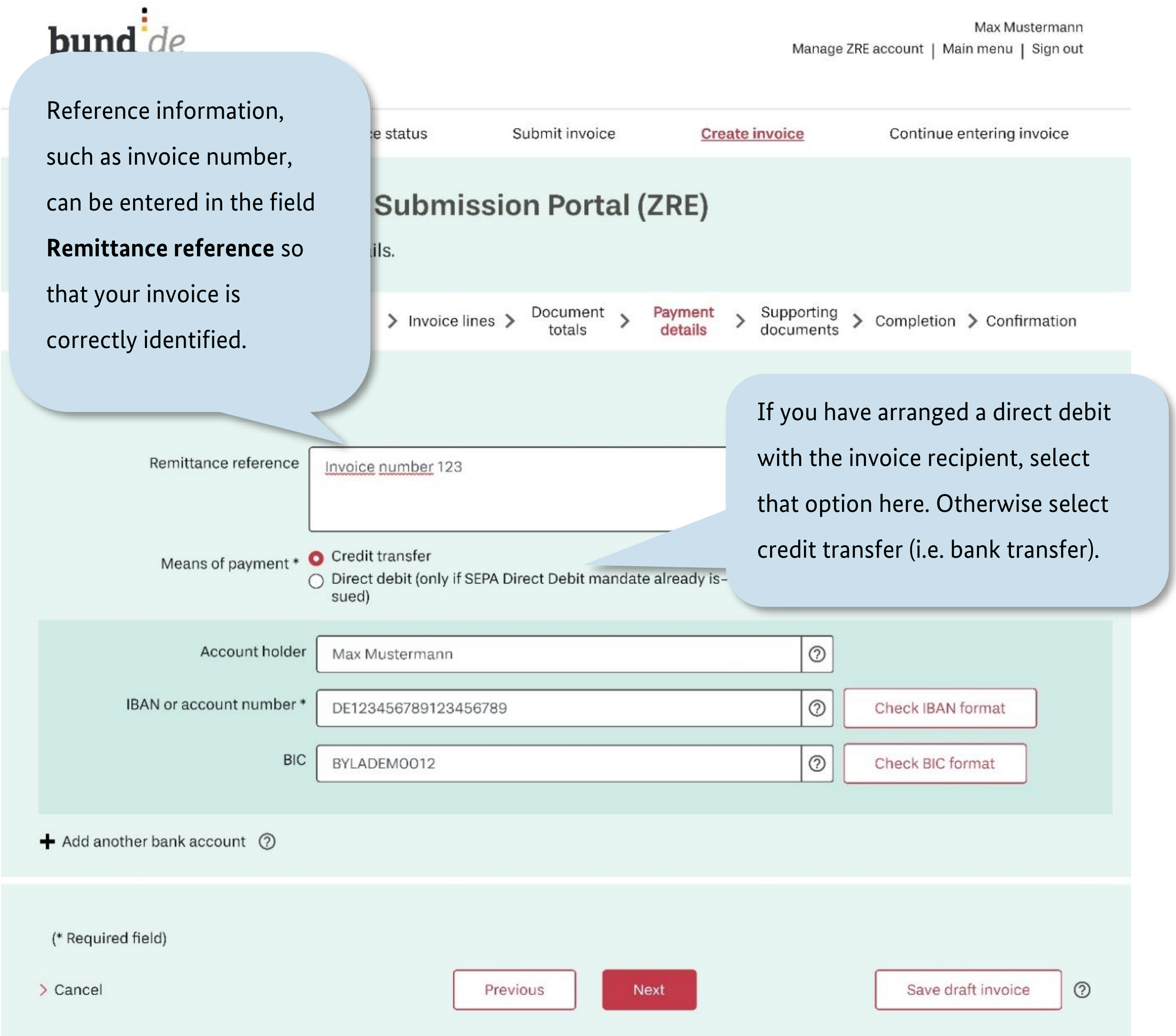

Figure 4.20 Creating invoices – The "Payment details" page (I/II)

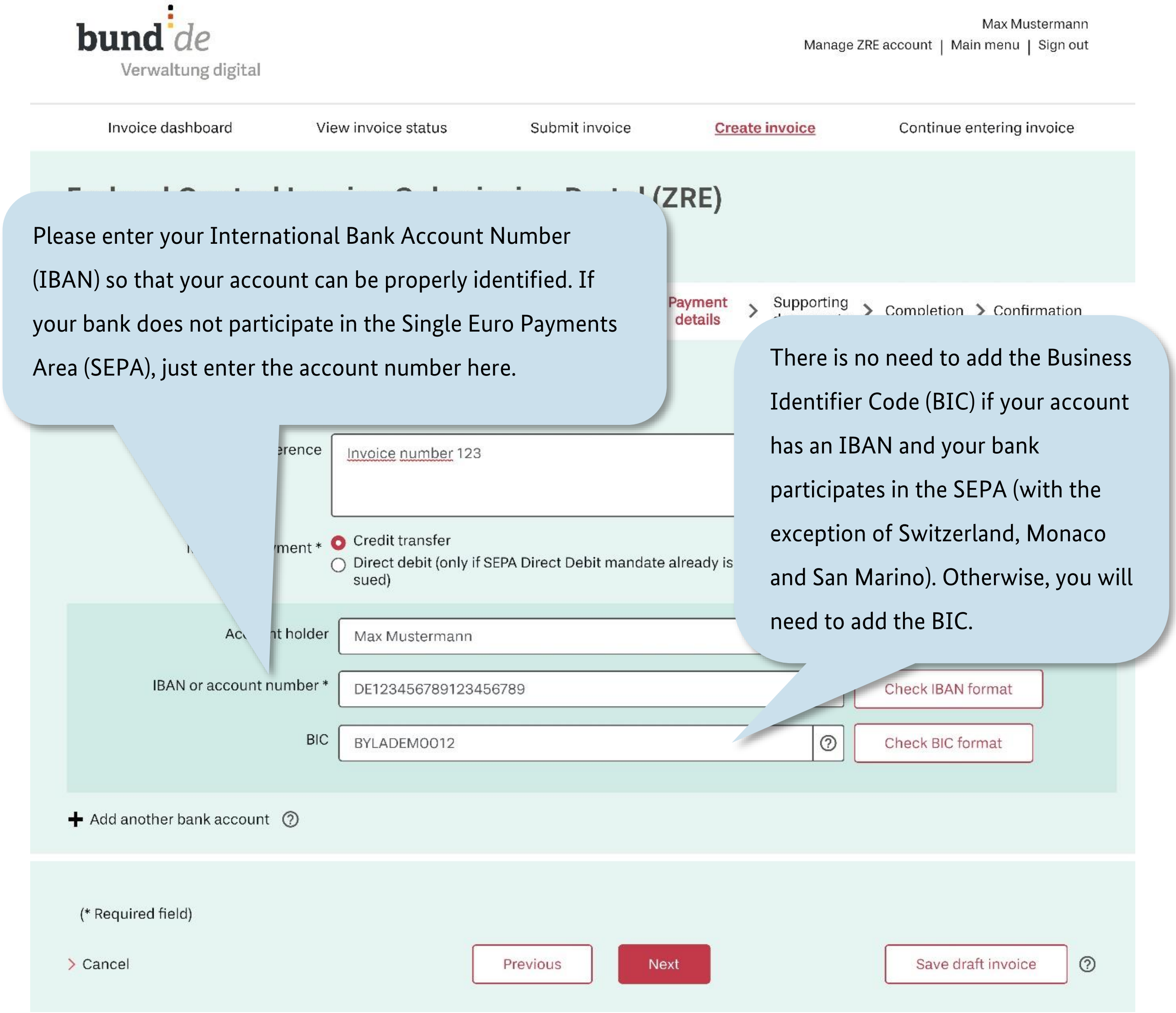

Figure 4.21 Creating invoices – The “Payment details” page (II/II)

4.7 Supporting documents

On the seventh page, titled **Supporting documents**, you can attach up to 200 files to support your invoice. The files should not exceed 11 MB in total.

(For better readability, the "Supporting documents" page is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled "I" and "II" in the figure captions.)

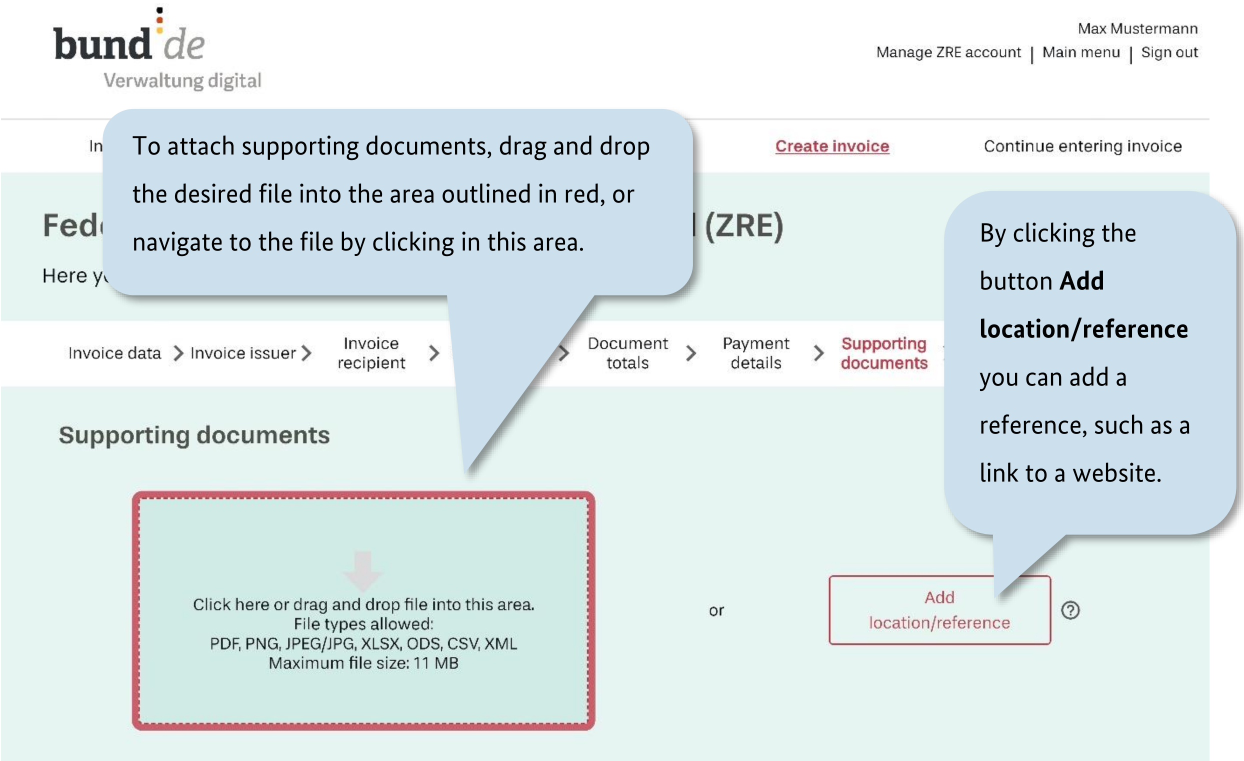

Figure 4.22 Creating invoices – The "Supporting documents" page (I/II)

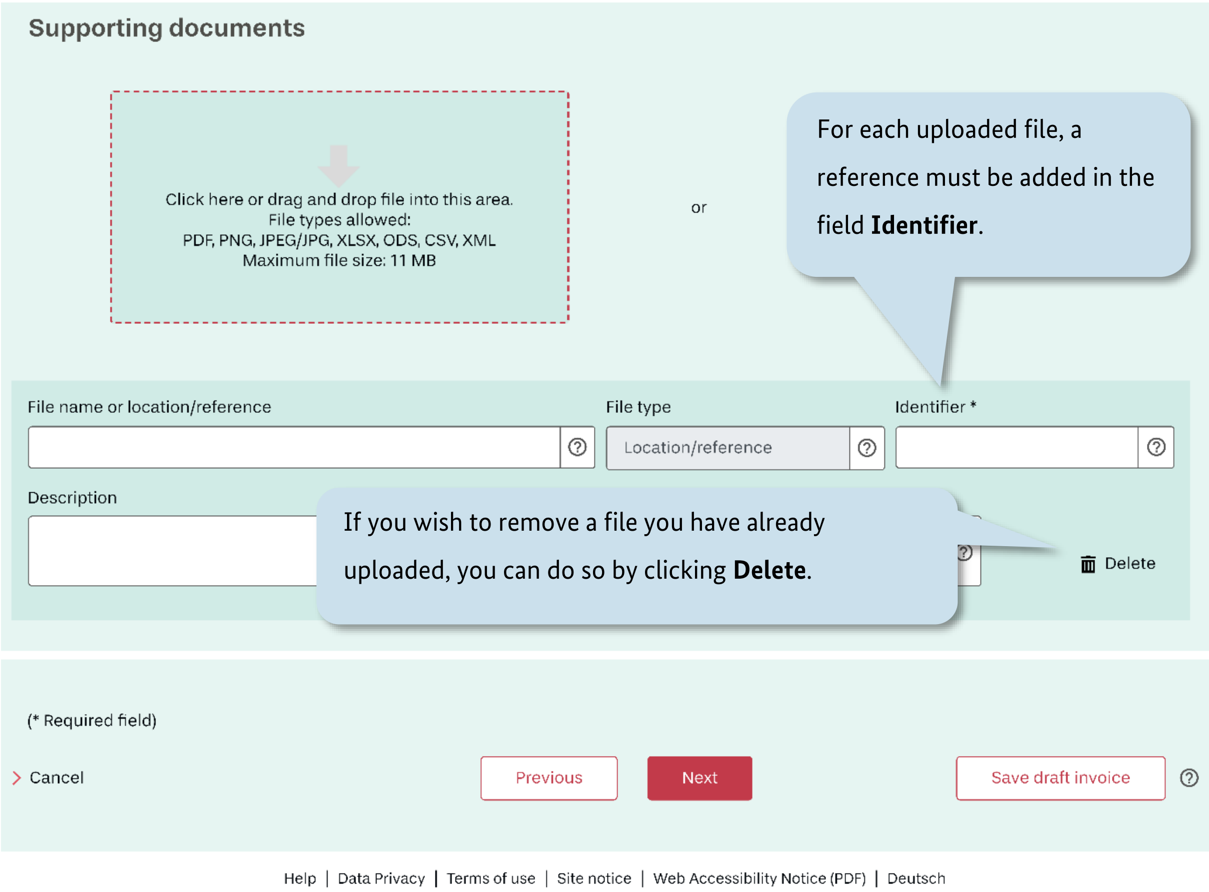

Figure 4.23 Creating invoices – The “Supporting documents” page (II/II)

4.8 Completion

Almost done! On the eighth page, titled **Completion**, the information you have entered is checked. Required fields that have not been properly completed are marked red.

(For better readability, the “Completion” page is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled “I”, “II” and “III” in the figure captions.)

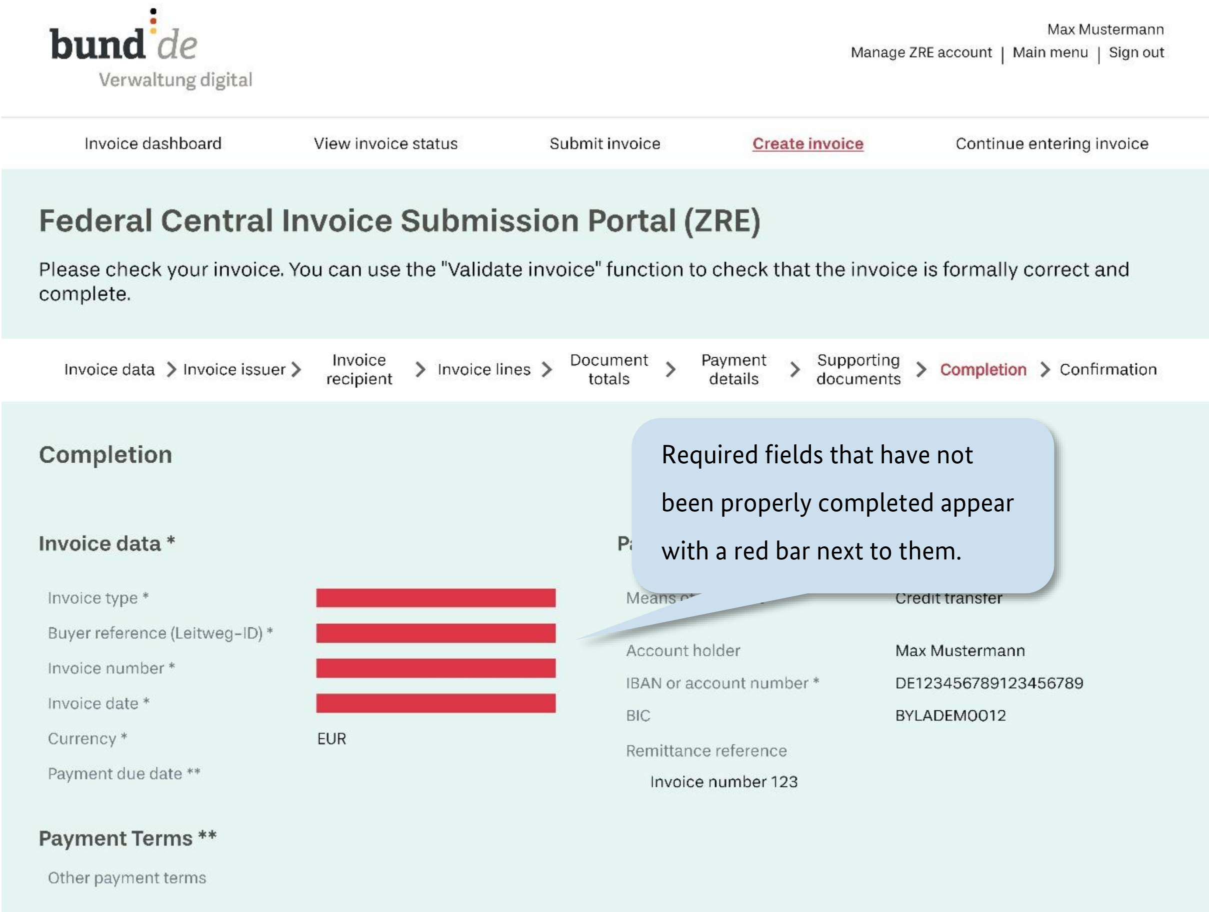

Figure 4.24 Creating invoices – The “Completion” page (I/III)

Contact Information

Information about the invoice issuer *

Company name *	Test Company
Seller identifier ***	
VAT identifier ***	
Tax number ***	

Invoice issuer's postal address *

Post code / town or city *	
Country *	Deutschland

Invoice issuer's contact details *

Name *	
Email *	
Telephone *	

Invoice recipient *

Name *	

Invoice recipient's postal address *

Post code / town or city *	
Country *	

Invoice lines

Invoice line number *	Item number	Name of item *		Total price (net) *
1	123	Test		15,129.00 EUR
Description			Unit * Working day	Quantity * 123
			VAT rate *	Unit price (net) * 123 EUR

Sum of invoice line net amount *	15,129.00 EUR
Invoice total amount without VAT *	15,129.00 EUR
Total VAT amount *	0.00 EUR
Total amount (VAT-inclusive) *	15,129.00 EUR
Amount due for payment *	15,129.00 EUR

Figure 4.25 Creating invoices – The “Completion” page (II/III)

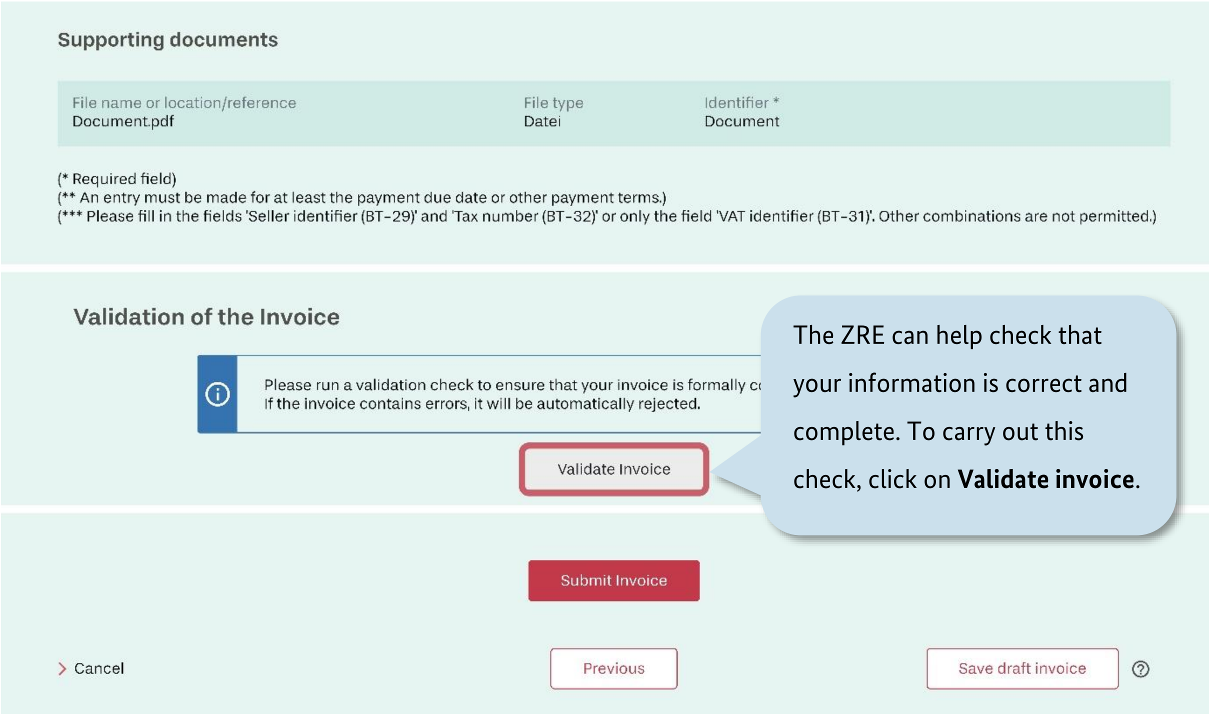

Figure 4.26 Creating invoices – The “Completion” page (III/III)

The ZRE helps you to identify places where corrections must be made. To carry out a check, click on **Validate invoice** (see figure 4.26). **Please note: The validation check can only confirm that the invoice is formally correct. Suppliers of goods and services are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of invoice content.**

After running the validation check, you will continue to see the “Completion” page. If errors were detected, you will see the notice “Validation errors” in the lower part of the page (see figure 4.27).

(For better readability, the invoice validation process is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled “I” and “II” in the figure captions. There is also a third screenshot showing a “Validation successful” notice.)

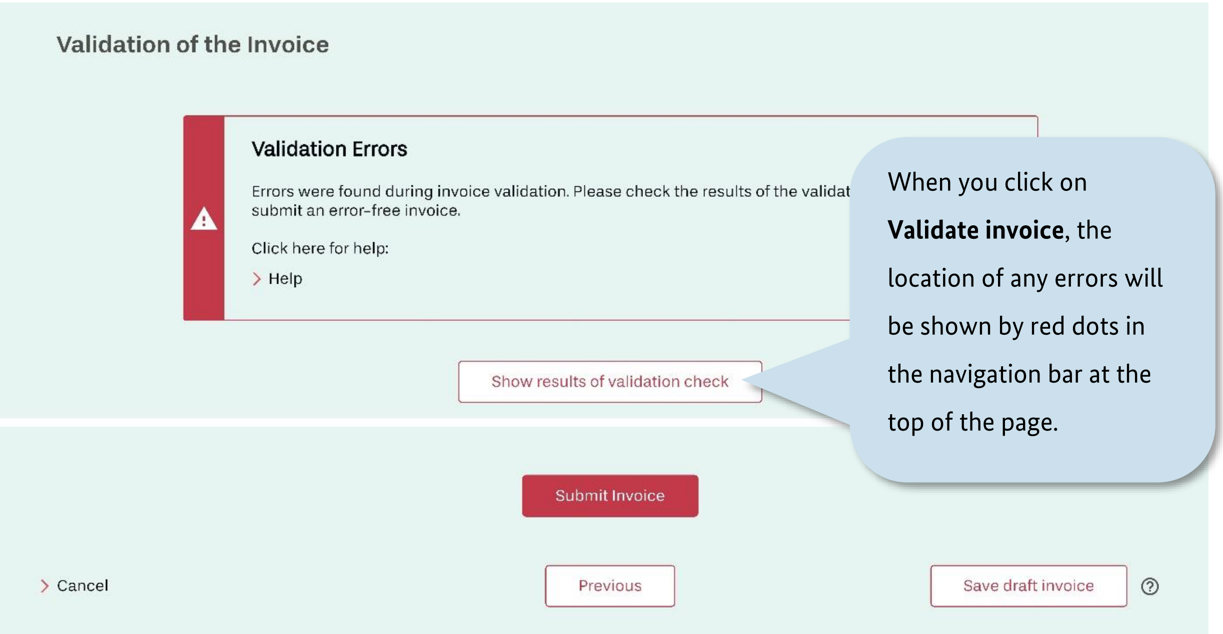

Figure 4.27 Invoice validation (I/II)

In the upper part of the "Completion" page, red dots (notifications) in the navigation bar show the steps in the invoice creation process where corrections must be made. Click on any steps in the navigation bar marked with red notifications to return to the relevant pages and correct the errors.

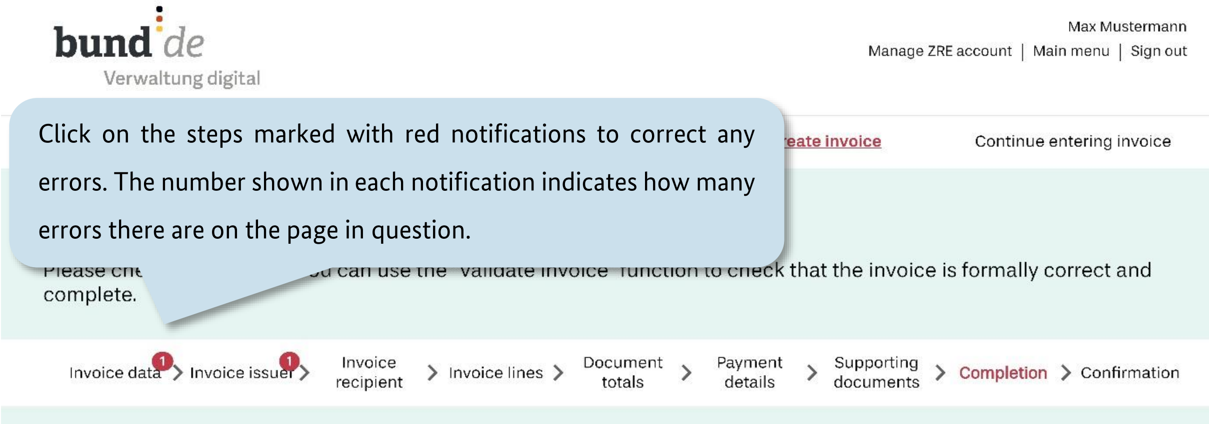

Figure 4.28 Invoice validation (II/II)

After you have made any necessary corrections, run another validation check on the invoice.

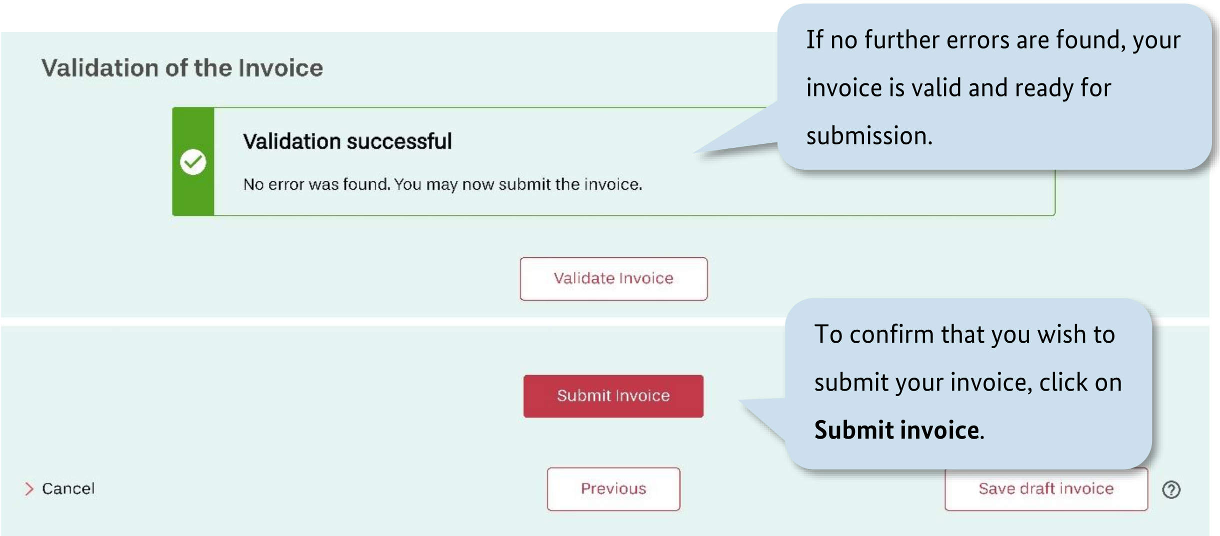

Figure 4.29 Invoice validation (validation successful)

If no further errors are found by the validation check, a notice will appear confirming that the validation was successful. You can then submit the invoice by clicking the **Submit invoice** button.

4.9 Confirmation

If the submission of your invoice is successful, a notice will appear informing you of your legal requirement to archive a copy of the invoice.

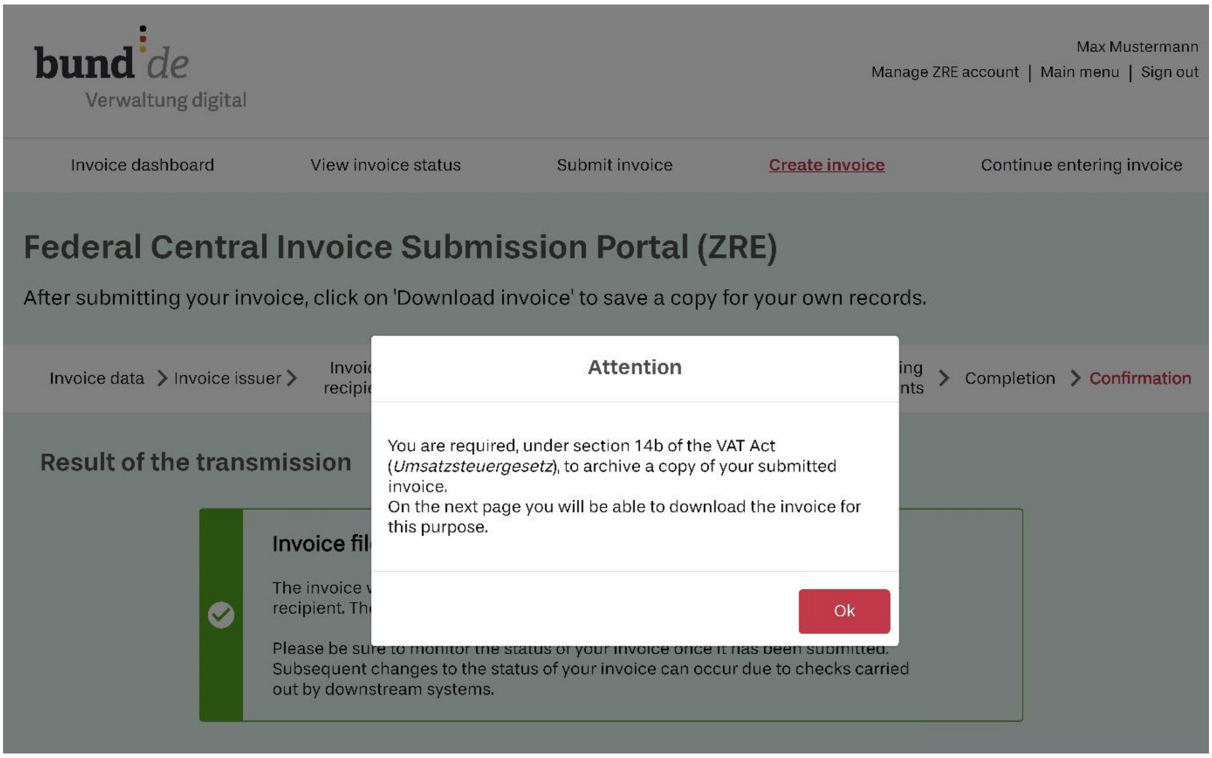

Figure 4.30 Creating invoices – Legal notice that appears on the "Confirmation" page upon successful submission of an invoice

When you click **Ok**, the legal notice disappears to reveal another notice containing the submission details, including the submission number of your invoice (see figure 4.31). Please remember to save a copy of your invoice for your own records. To do this, click on **Download invoice**.

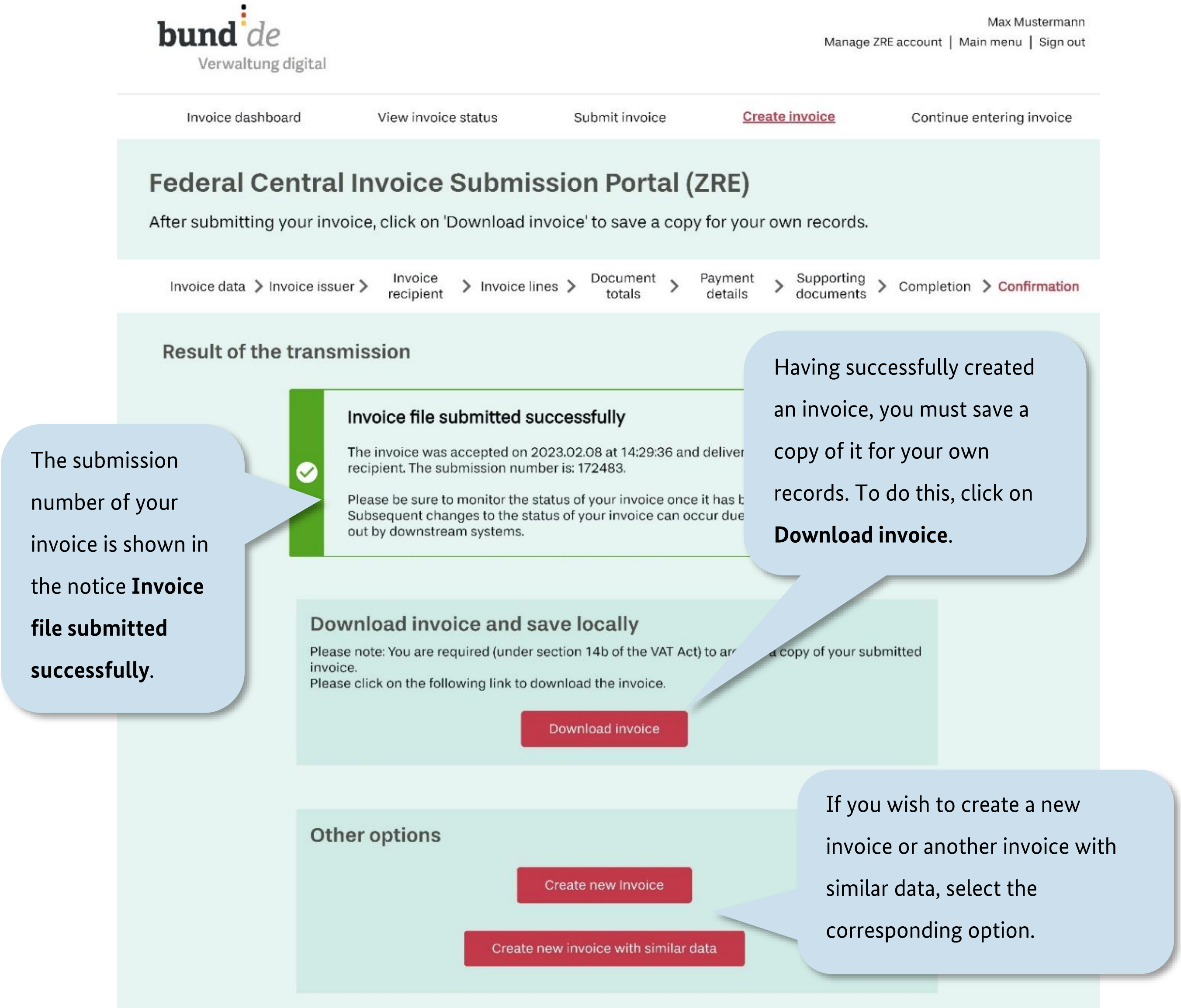

Figure 4.31 Creating invoices – The “Confirmation” page, with notice containing submission details of your invoice

You will find the downloaded copy of your invoice in your computer's download folder. The invoice creation process is now complete. Your invoice has been successfully submitted.

5 Saving your invoice as a draft or template

The ZRE allows you to save your invoice locally in the file format “.er” for later use. This means you can save invoices which are not yet finished, upload them again later to the ZRE, and continue the process from where you left off. You can also use .er files as templates for future invoices and test invoices. The advantage of this is that after uploading an .er file (see section 6) you can edit all the data and create a new invoice in just a few steps. However, you can only use .er files in the ZRE, not in any other portal.

To save a draft copy of your current invoice, click the **Save draft invoice** button, which appears at the bottom right of every page in the invoice creation process.

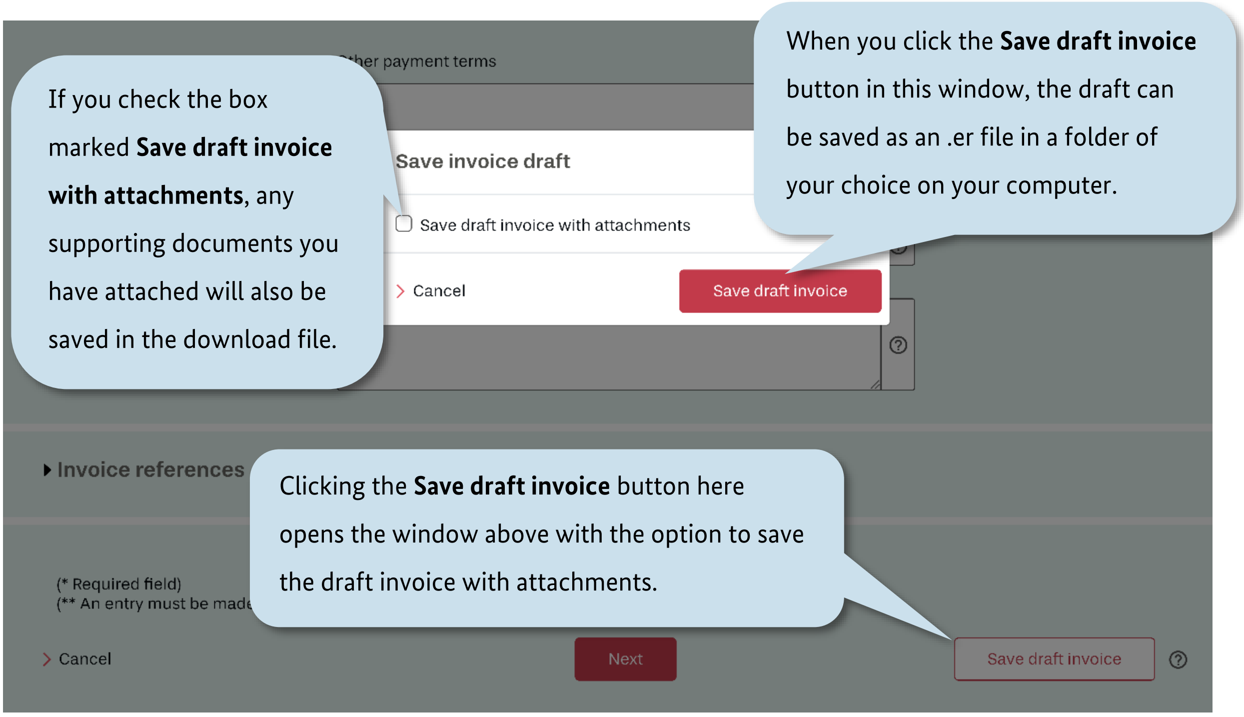

Figure 5.1 Saving a draft invoice

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of the Interior
and Community

6 Uploading a draft invoice or template

To continue working on a draft invoice, or to upload a template you created earlier, first return to the invoice dashboard.

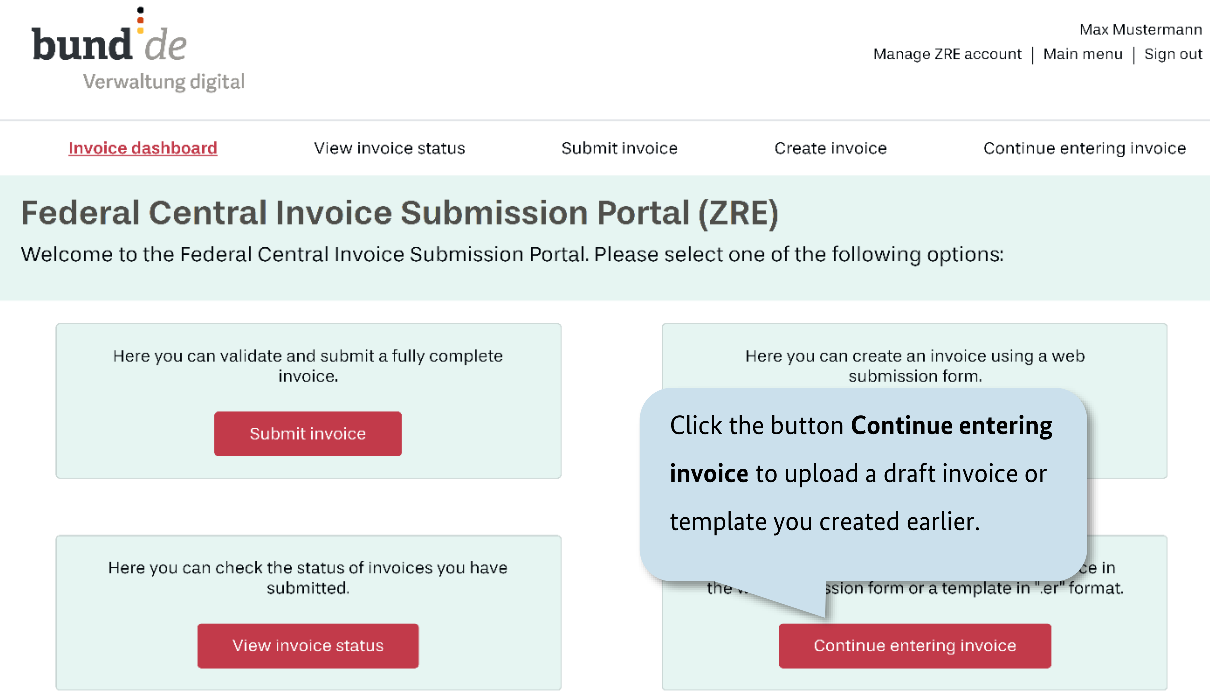


Figure 6.1 “Continue entering invoice” – The button to select on the invoice dashboard

Having selected the option **Continue entering invoice**, you will see the upload screen shown below. Here you can upload the file you saved earlier.

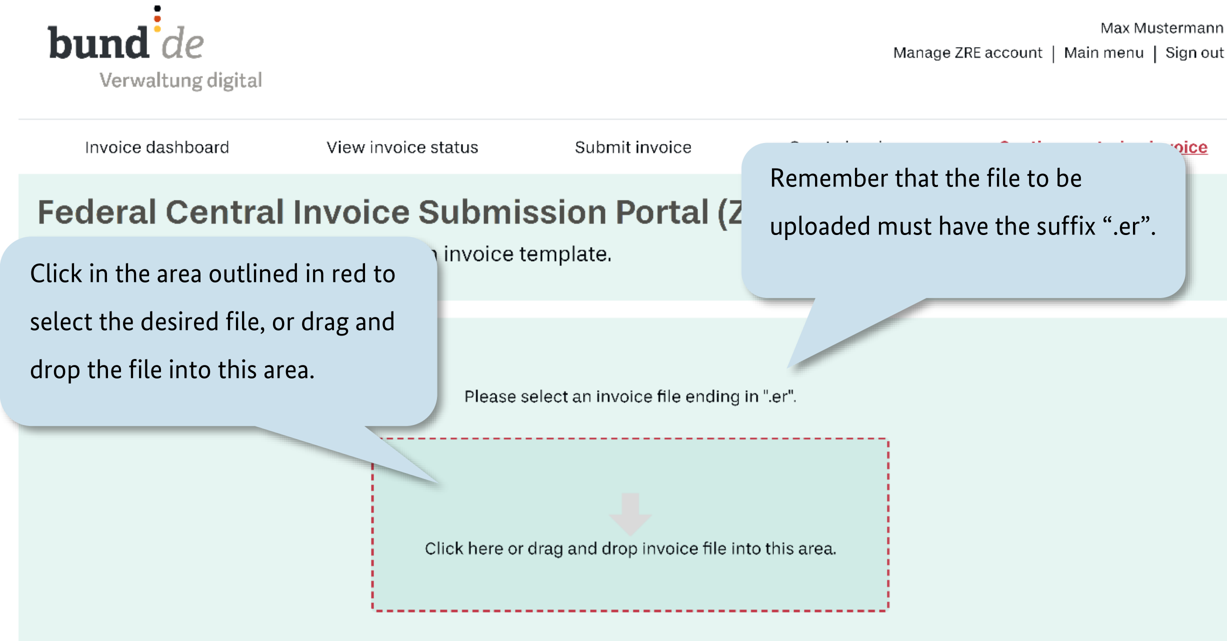


Figure 6.2 “Continue entering invoice” – The upload page

After selecting the desired file, you can upload it.

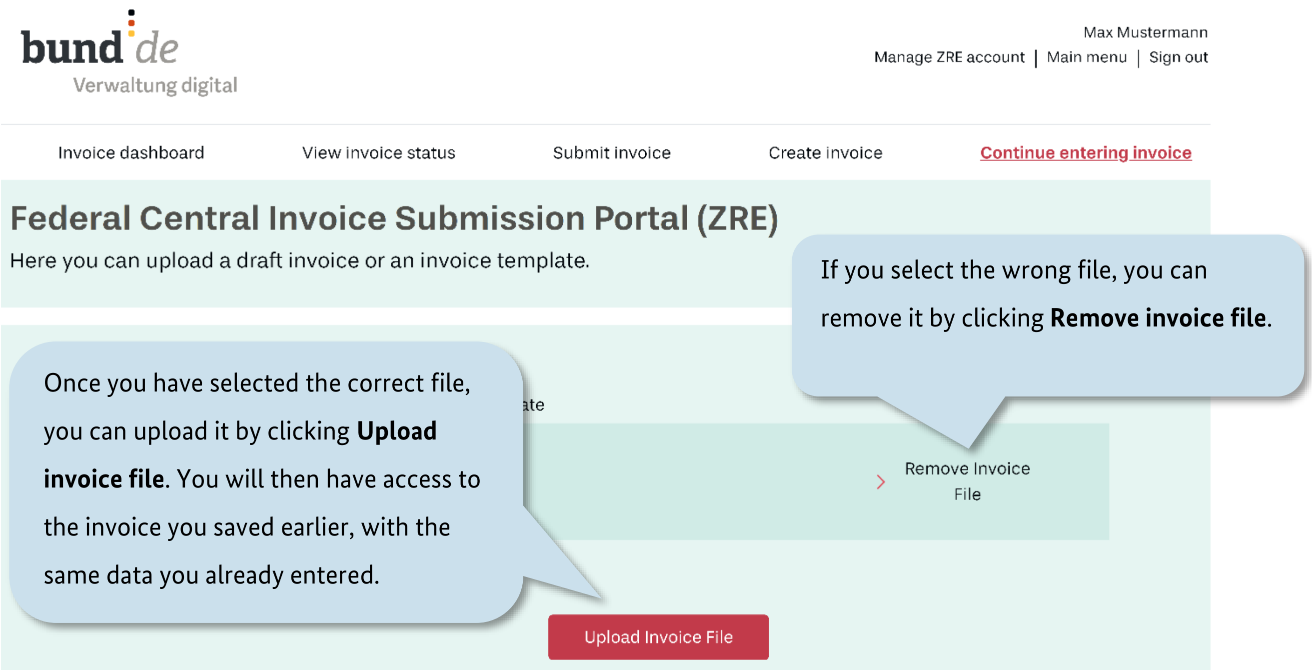


Figure 6.3 “Continue entering invoice” – The upload page with uploaded invoice

The data from the uploaded invoice is then displayed on the relevant pages in the ZRE, allowing you to continue creating your invoice from where you left off last time (see section 4.1 onwards).

7 Uploading and submitting externally created invoices

To upload externally created invoices, go to the invoice dashboard and select the option **Submit invoice**.

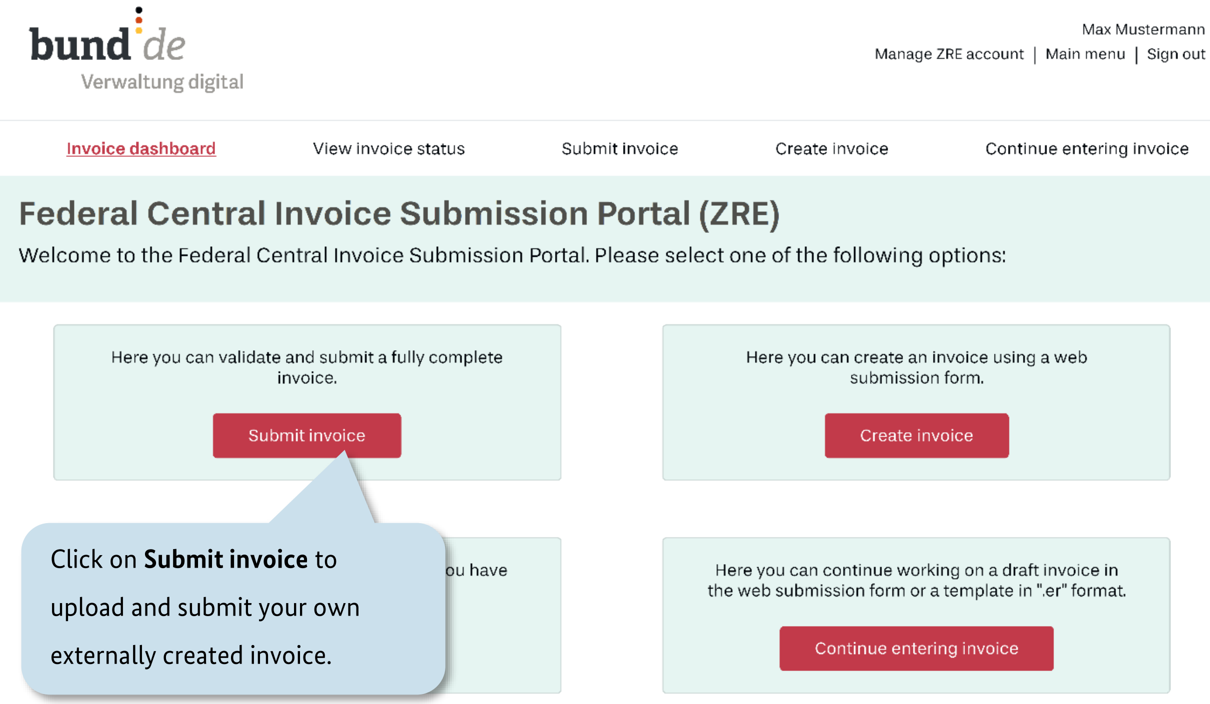


Figure 7.1 “Submit invoice” – The button to select on the invoice dashboard

A page will open showing an area outlined in red. Clicking in this area will allow you to find and select the invoice file from where it is saved on your computer. Alternatively, you can drag and drop the invoice file into this area.

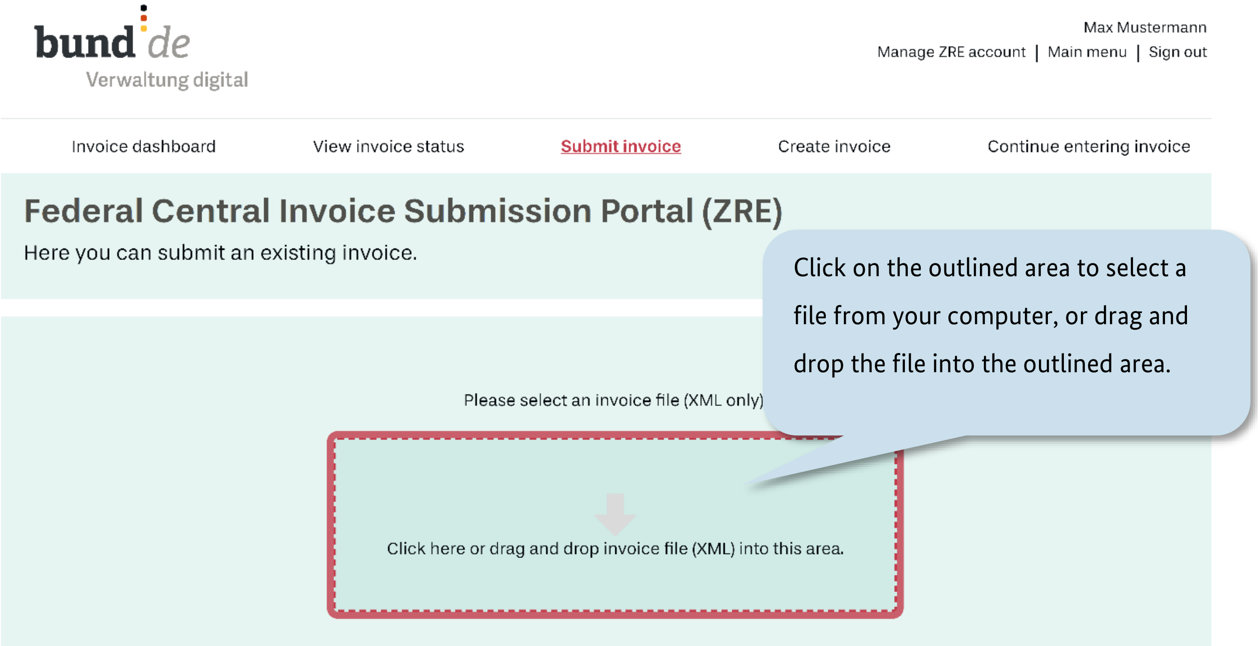


Figure 7.2 “Submit invoice” – The upload page for externally created invoices

Once you have uploaded your invoice to this page, the buttons **Validate invoice** and **Submit invoice** will appear.

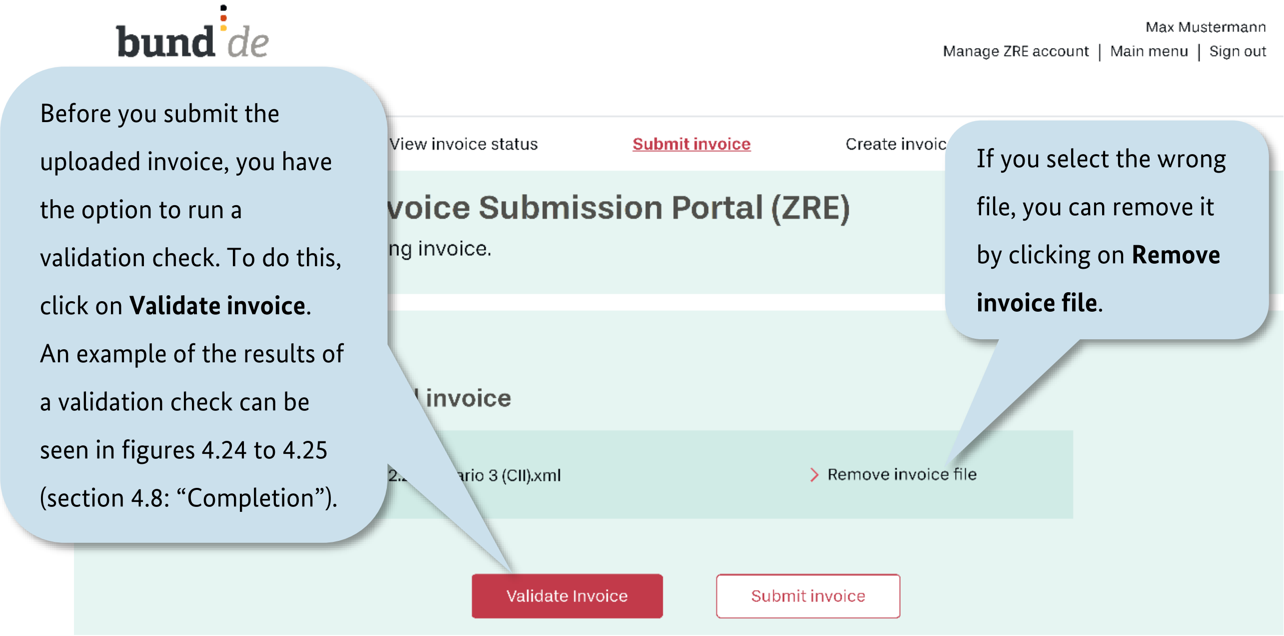


Figure 7.3 “Submit invoice” – An externally created invoice uploaded to the ZRE

8 Viewing invoice status

To check the status of invoices you have sent, go to the invoice dashboard and select the option **View invoice status**.

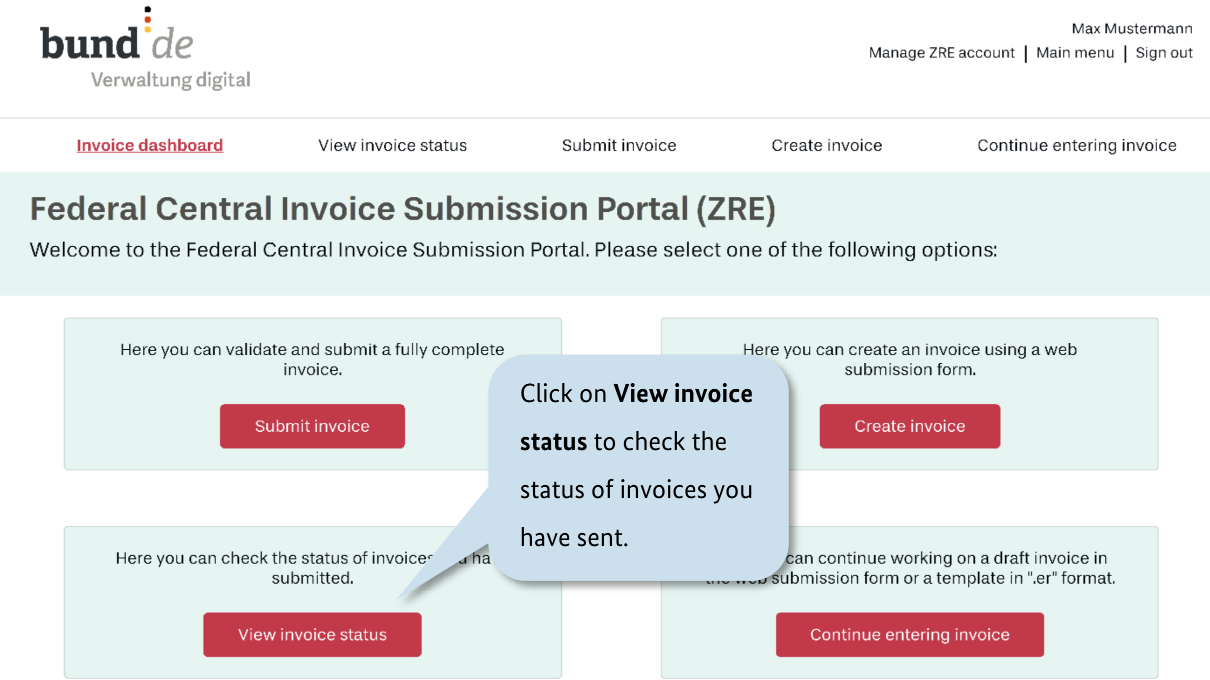


Figure 8.1 “View invoice status” – The button to select on the invoice dashboard

The status page lists all the invoices you have sent and shows their current status.

(For better readability, the “View invoice status” page is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled “I”, “II” and “III” in the figure captions.)

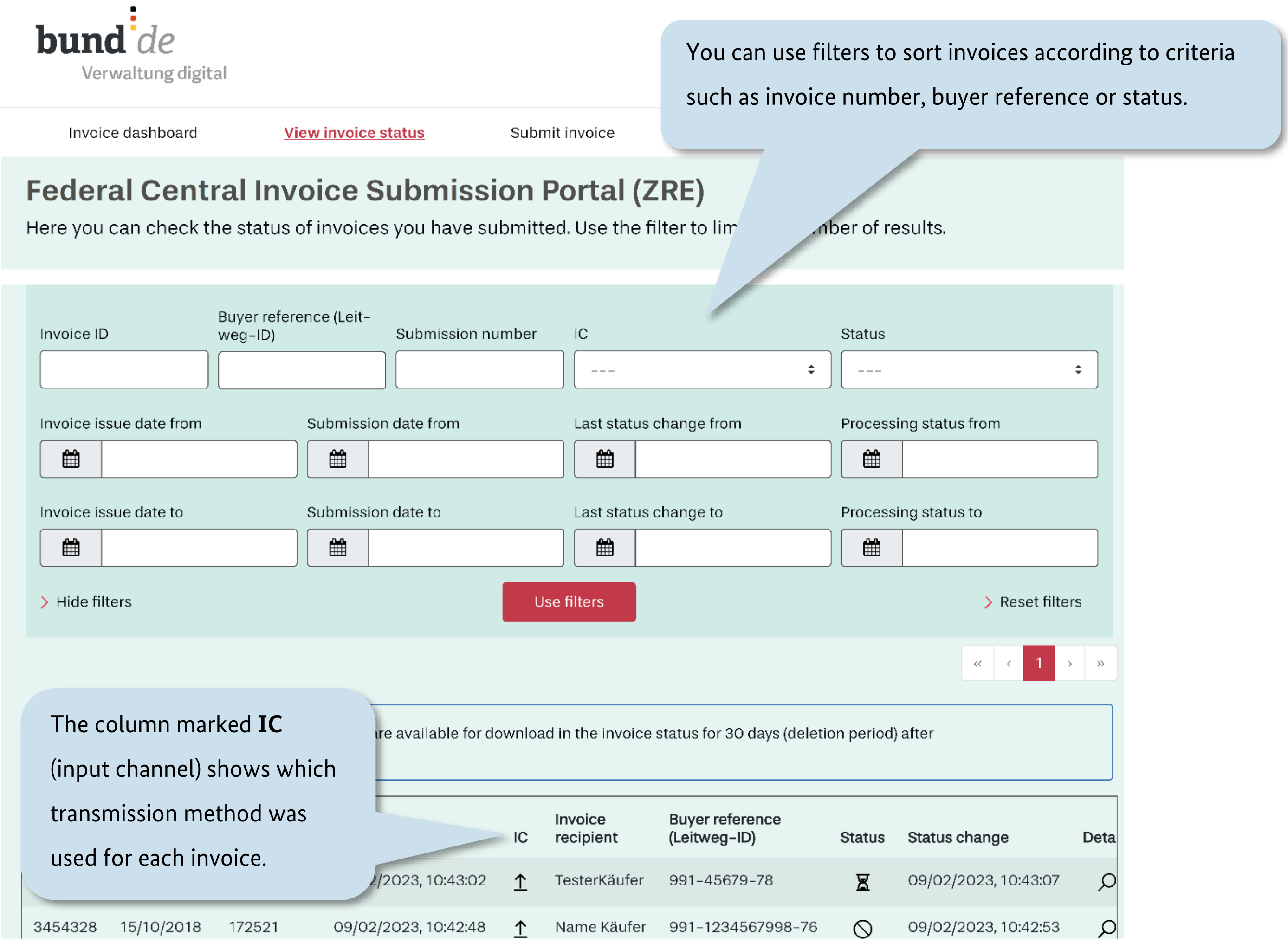


Figure 8.2 “View invoice status” – List of submitted invoices with filter function (I/III)

You can also download any invoices you have created manually using the ZRE web submission process. This is possible for up to 30 days after their submission date. The download option for each invoice is in the very last column of the list. You may need to scroll to the right in order to see it (see figure 8.3).

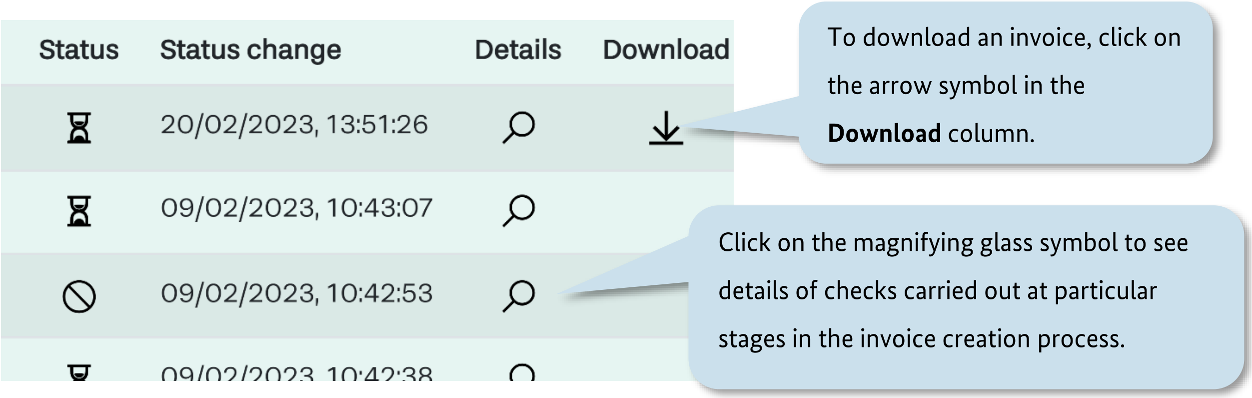


Figure 8.3 “View invoice status” – List of submitted invoices with filter function (II/III) (close-up)

If you click on the magnifying glass symbol in the **Details** column, you will see information from formal checks carried out on the invoice in question, e.g. the reason why a submitted invoice was rejected.

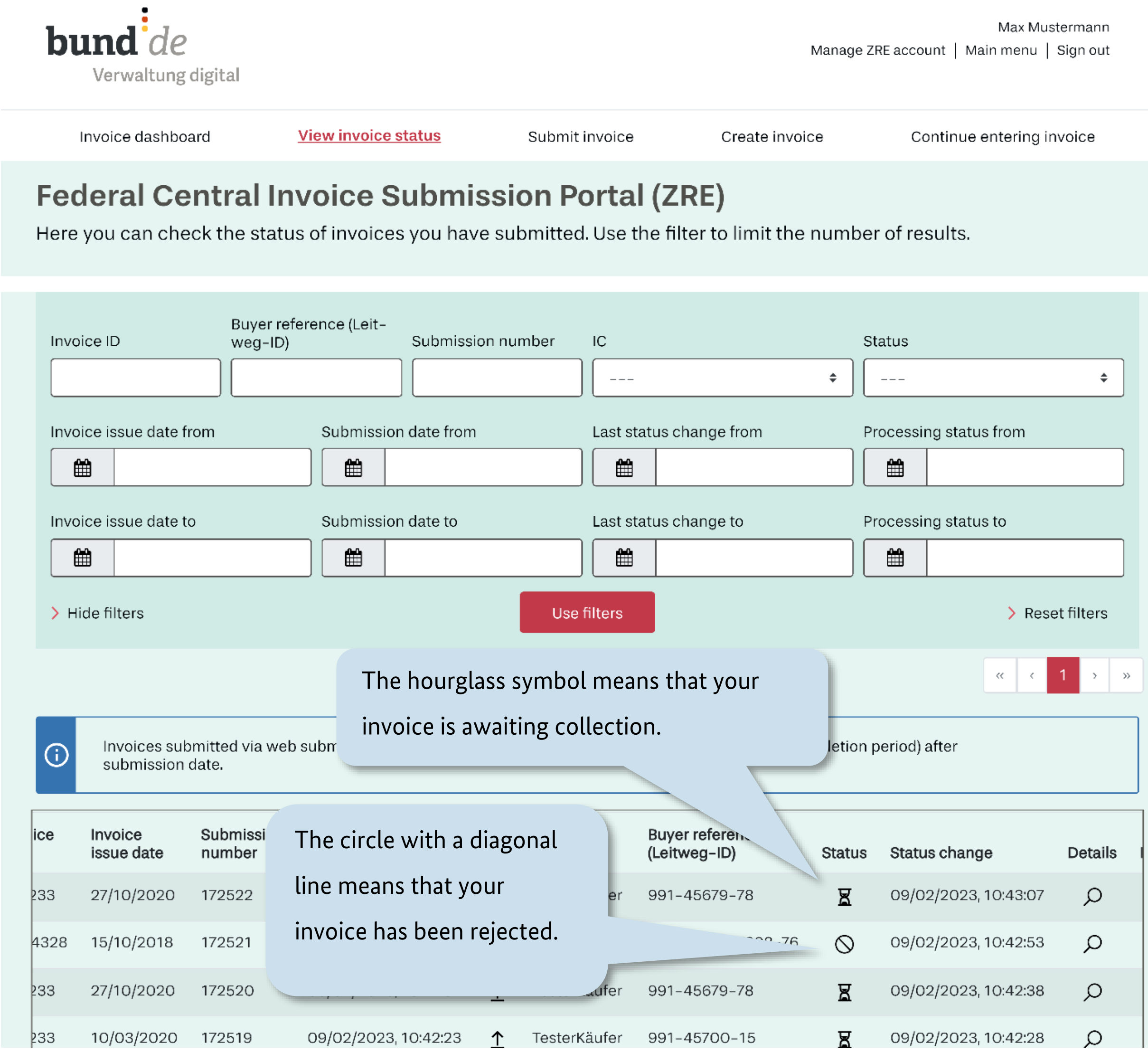
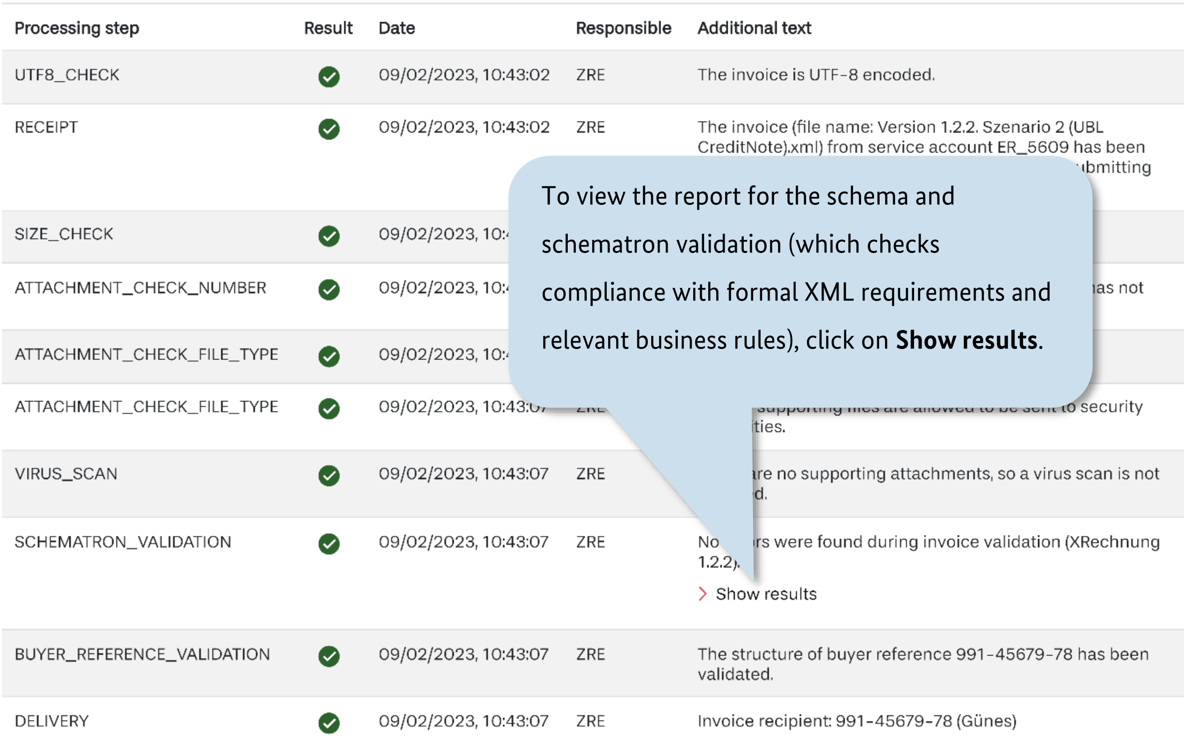


Figure 8.4 “View invoice status” – List of submitted invoices with filter function (III/III)

Clicking on the magnifying glass symbol in the **Details** column will take you to the page shown below. Here you can see the results of checks carried out at particular stages in the invoice creation process.



Processing step	Result	Date	Responsible	Additional text
UTF8_CHECK		09/02/2023, 10:43:02	ZRE	The invoice is UTF-8 encoded.
RECEIPT		09/02/2023, 10:43:02	ZRE	The invoice (file name: Version 1.2.2. Szenario 2 (UBL CreditNote).xml) from service account ER_5609 has been ... ubmitting
SIZE_CHECK		09/02/2023, 10:...		
ATTACHMENT_CHECK_NUMBER		09/02/2023, 10:...		... as not
ATTACHMENT_CHECK_FILE_TYPE		09/02/2023, 10:...		
ATTACHMENT_CHECK_FILE_TYPE		09/02/2023, 10:43:07		... supporting files are allowed to be sent to security ... ties.
VIRUS_SCAN		09/02/2023, 10:43:07	ZRE	... re no supporting attachments, so a virus scan is not ... d.
SCHEMATRON_VALIDATION		09/02/2023, 10:43:07	ZRE	No ... rs were found during invoice validation (XRechnung 1.2.2). > Show results
BUYER_REFERENCE_VALIDATION		09/02/2023, 10:43:07	ZRE	The structure of buyer reference 991-45679-78 has been validated.
DELIVERY		09/02/2023, 10:43:07	ZRE	Invoice recipient: 991-45679-78 (Günes)

Figure 8.5 A processing report for an e-invoice (accessible via the “View invoice status” page)

9 ZRE user profile

To open your user profile, click on the words **Manage ZRE account**, which appear at the top right of every page that can be accessed via the invoice dashboard.

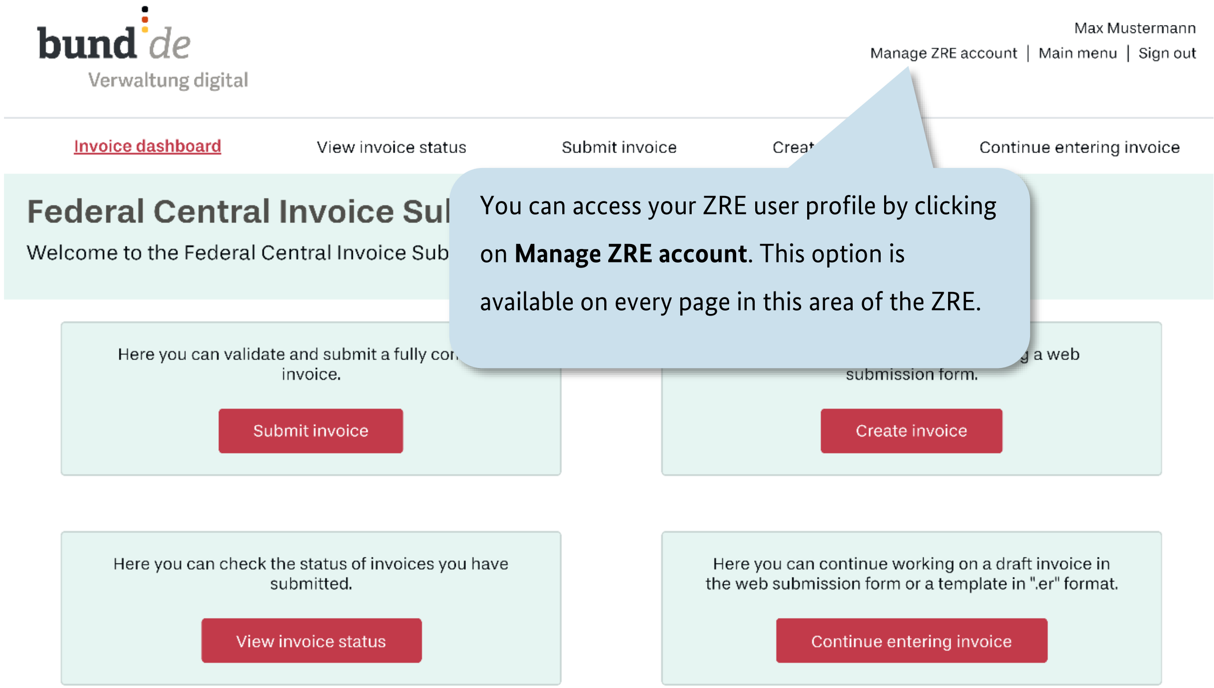


Figure 9.1 Opening your ZRE user profile

In your user profile you can change your email address and transmission methods. You also have the option to delete your ZRE account.

(For better readability, the user profile page is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled "I", "II" and "III" in the figure captions.)

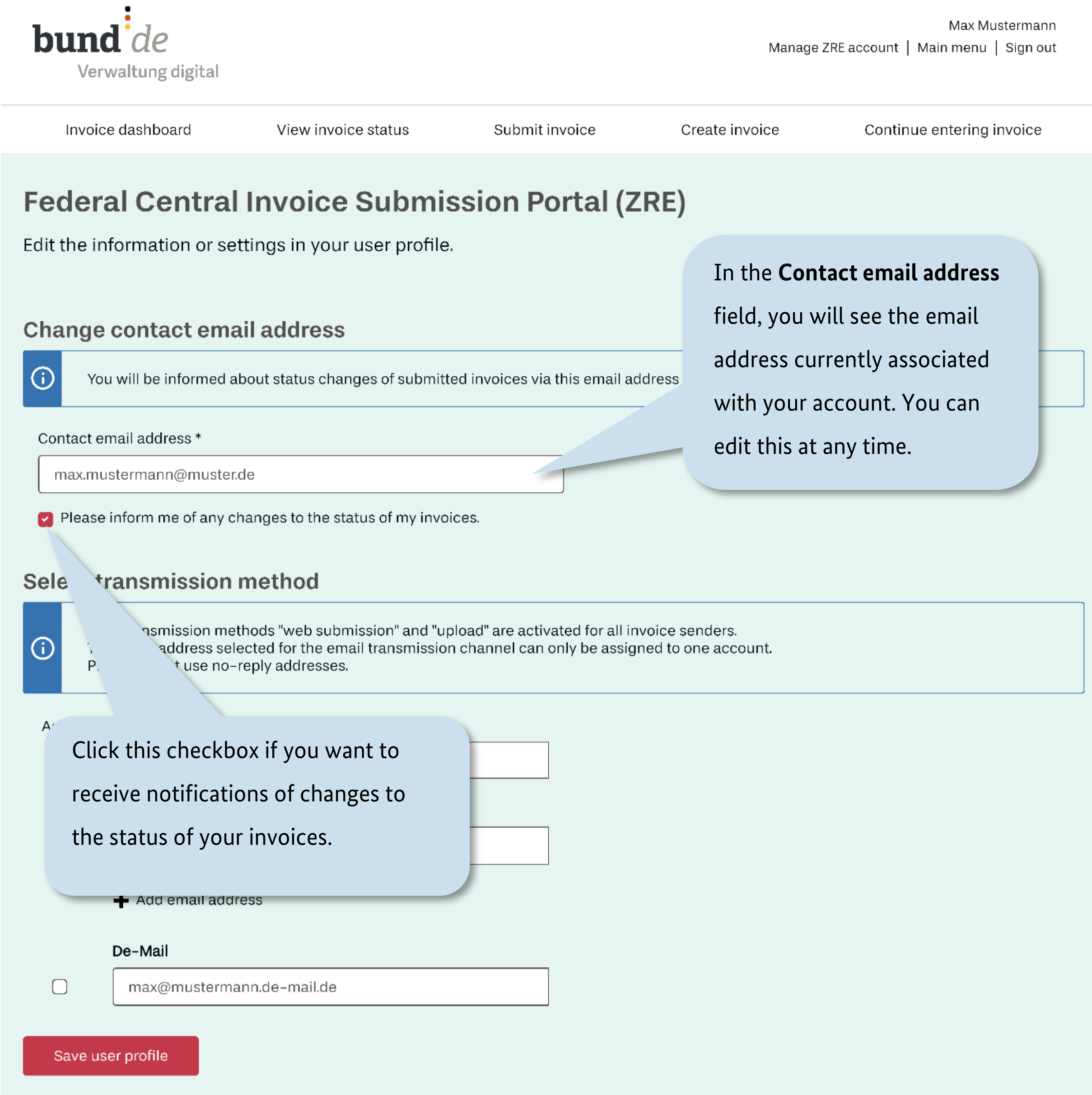


Figure 9.2 "Manage ZRE account" (I/III)

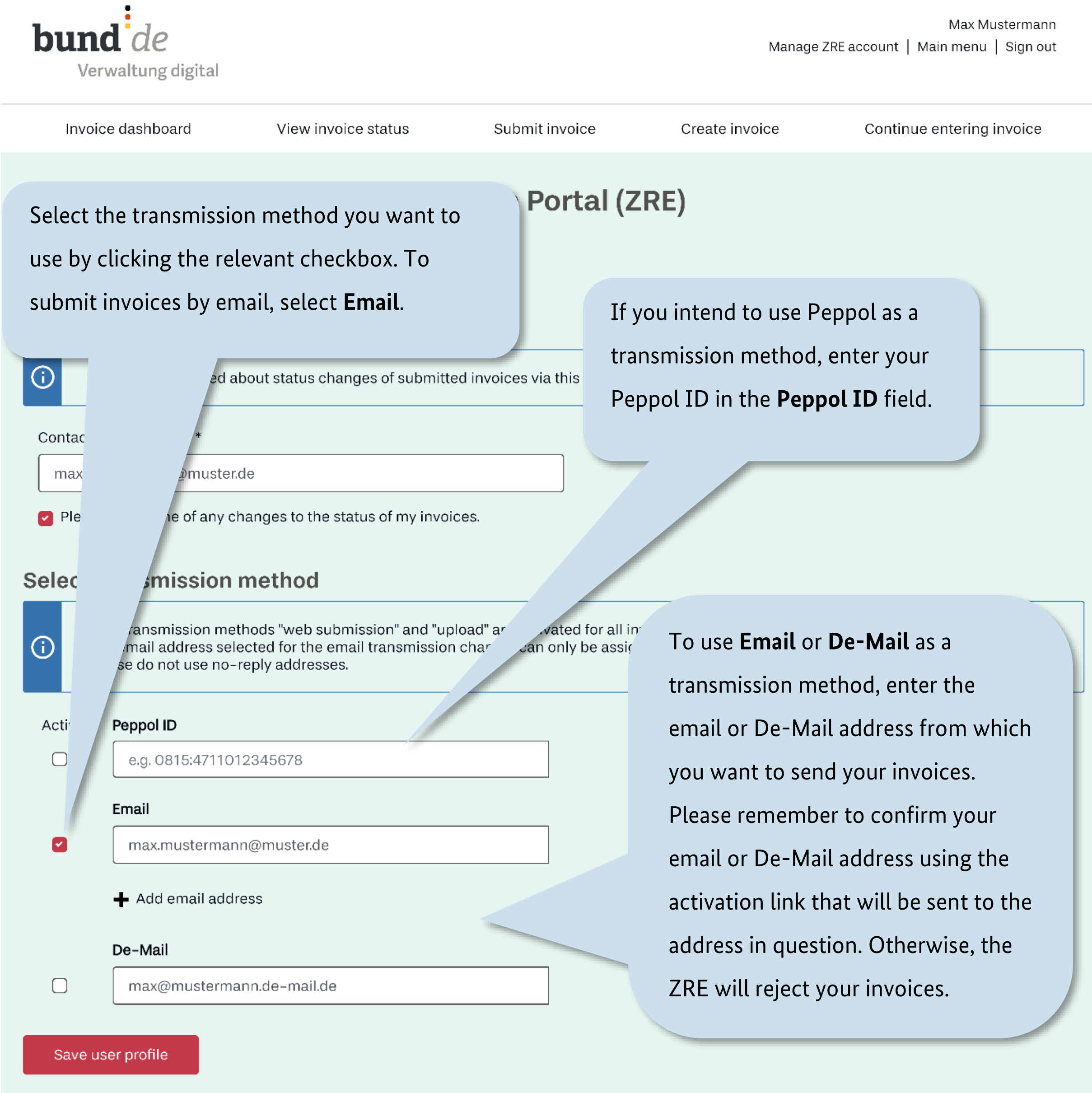


Figure 9.3 “Manage ZRE account” (II/III)

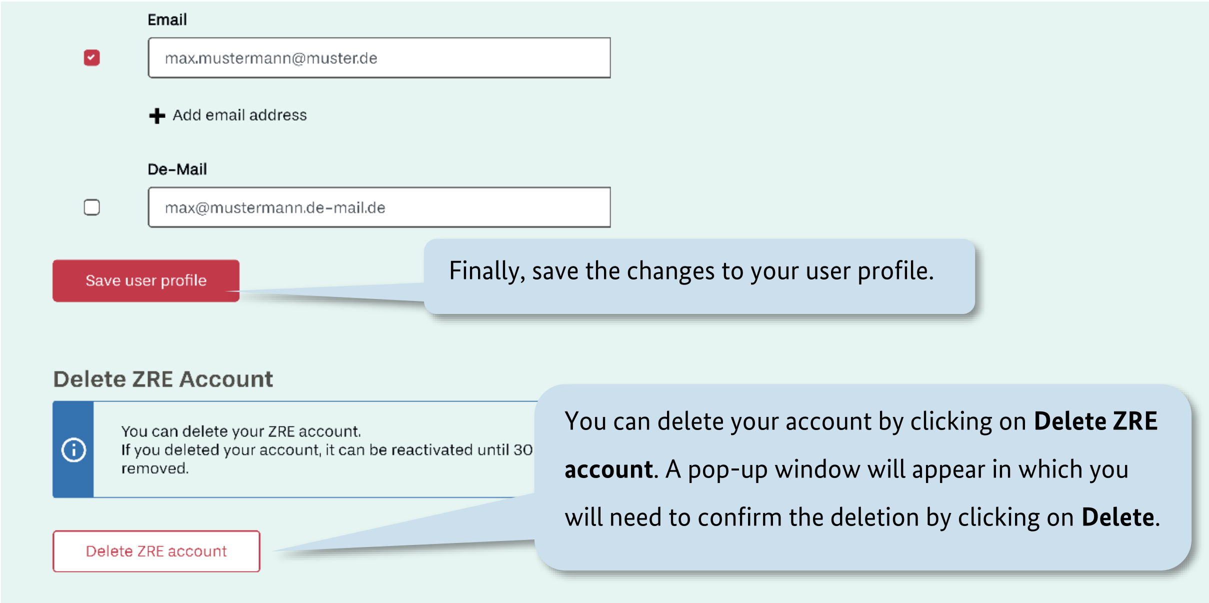


Figure 9.4 “Manage ZRE account” (III/III)

To save your changes, click on **Save user profile**.

The email address you use as a transmission method can be the same as your contact email address. Please do not use a no-reply address for your contact email, because this address will be used to notify you of changes in the status of your invoice. You may enter up to five email addresses.

10 Submitting invoices via email

The ZRE allows you to submit invoices by email. To use email as a transmission method you will need to enter an email address for this purpose in your ZRE user profile (see figure 9.4).

After saving the changes to your user profile, you will be notified that the email address entered as your transmission method has not yet been verified. You will then receive an email from the ZRE containing an activation link. The link is valid for 24 hours. If you do not receive an email automatically, click on **Resend verification email**. Click on the activation link to verify your email address. If you do not click on the link within 24 hours, you can go to your user profile and request a new activation link to be sent to your email address.

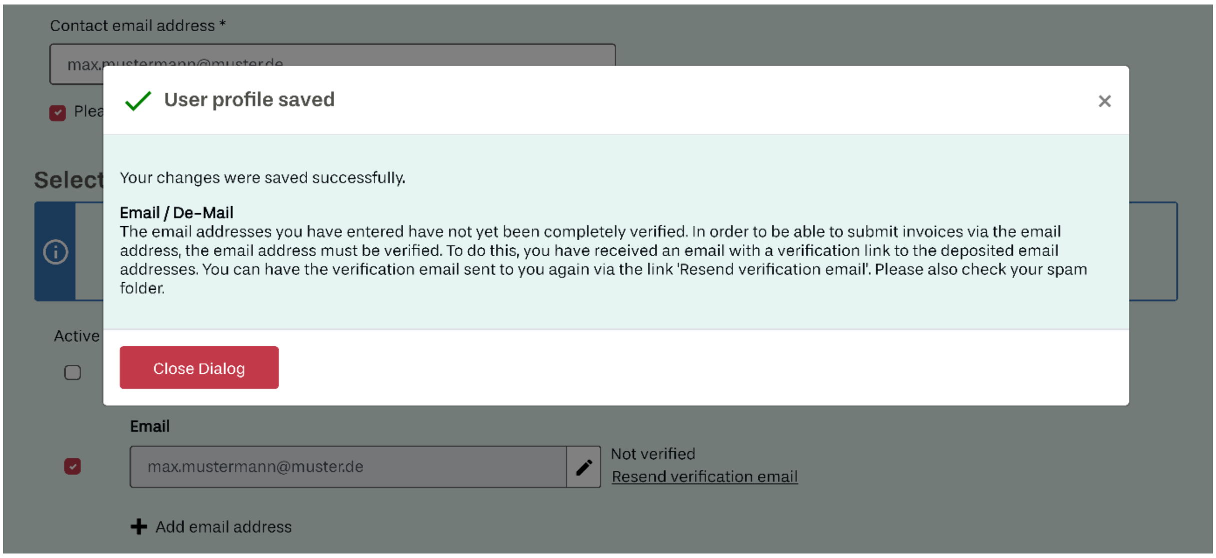


Figure 10.1 Activating email as a transmission method

To send an electronic invoice from your newly verified email address, attach the invoice as a file in XML format and send your email to **xrechnung@portal.bund.de**

Please note the following points:

1. To submit invoices via email, you must send them from the email address you entered in your user profile as your transmission method.
2. Each email may only include one XML file. Otherwise the email will be rejected with an error message.
3. The XML file must be in a format recognised by the ZRE. For details of currently valid file formats, see the ZRE terms of use, which can be accessed via the link at the bottom of every page on the ZRE website.
4. You can check the “View invoice status” page to see whether an invoice you have submitted has been delivered (transmission method = 🖂). In the “Details” column of the list, you can call up detailed information on each invoice you have submitted.
5. If, after multiple requests, you still haven’t received a link to verify your email address as a transmission method, please contact the help desk. Use the keyword “bounce” to describe the problem.

11 Submitting invoices via Peppol

The ZRE allows you to submit e-invoices via Peppol. To check invoices submitted via Peppol on the “View invoice status” page, you must select Peppol as the transmission method in your ZRE user profile. It is possible to submit invoices via Peppol without entering your Peppol ID in your ZRE user profile, but this is not recommended, because then your invoices will not be identified as belonging to your account and will not be shown on the “View invoice status” page.

(For better readability, the process for activating Peppol as a transmission method is shown using multiple screenshots. These are labelled “I”, “II” and “III” in the figure captions.)

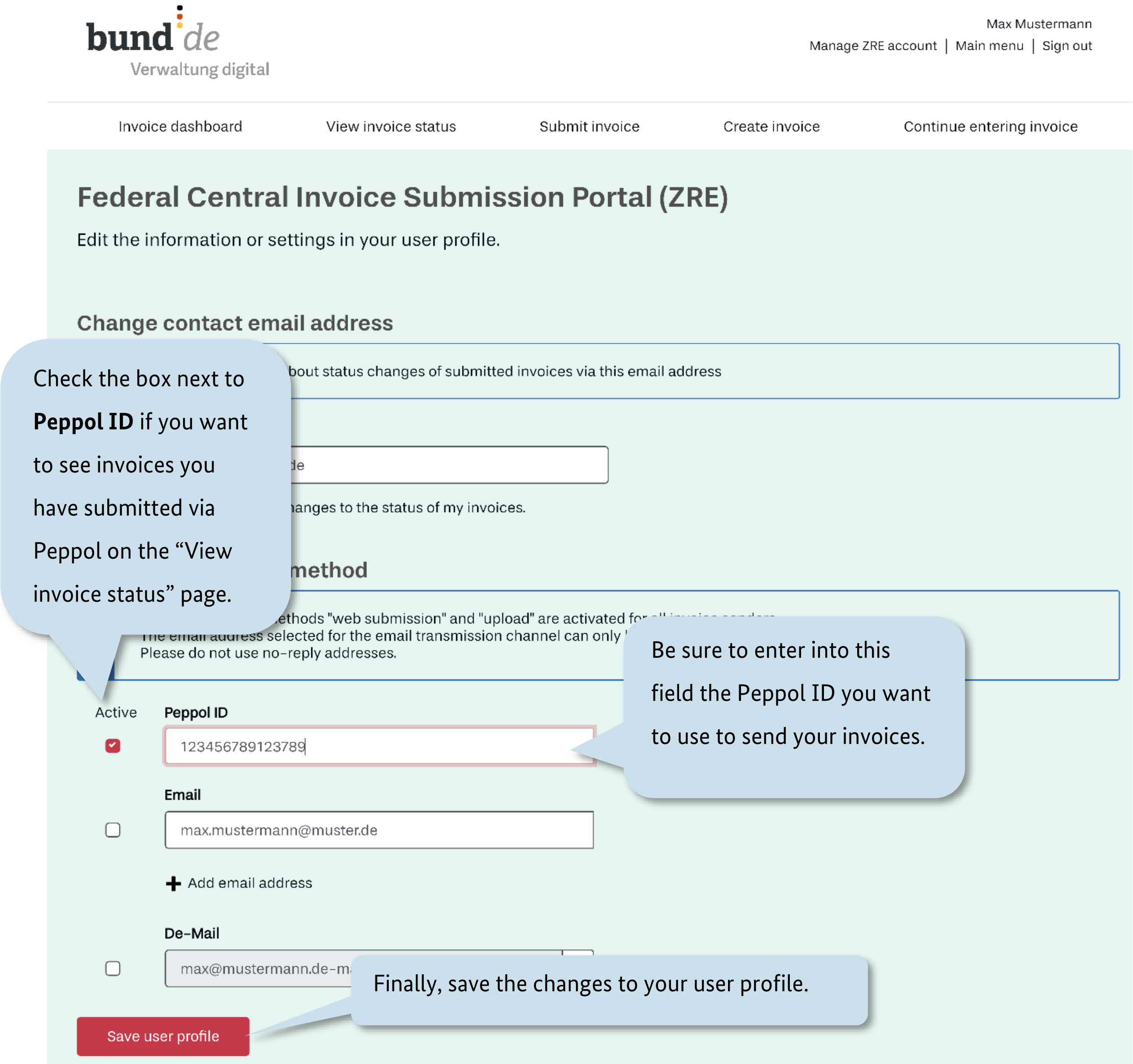


Figure 11.1 Activating Peppol as a transmission method (I/III)

After saving the changes to your user profile, you will be notified that your Peppol ID has not yet been verified. The ZRE will generate a “verification attachment” for you to download.

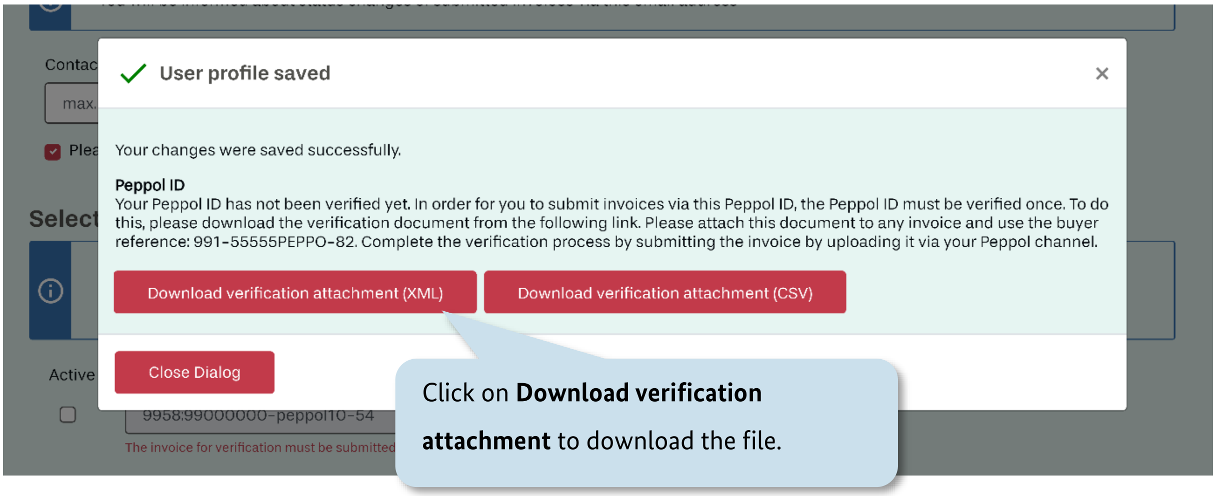


Figure 11.2 Activating Peppol as a transmission method (II/III)

Once you have downloaded and saved the verification attachment (XML version), embed the entire contents of the XML file (Base64-encoded, with padding) to any electronic invoice. Please use the appropriate syntax for the format of the invoice.

For invoices in the **UN/CEFACT** format, use the following path:

```
/rsm:CrossIndustryInvoice/rsm:SupplyChainTradeTransaction/ram:ApplicableHeaderTradeAgreement/ram:AdditionalReferencedDocument/ram:AttachmentBinaryObject
```

For invoices in the **UBL** format, use the following path:

```
/cac:AdditionalDocumentReference/cac:Attachment/EmbeddedDocumentBina
ryObject

Example (UBL):

<cac:AdditionalDocumentReference>
    <cbc:ID>some</cbc:ID>
    <cac:Attachment>
      <cbc:EmbeddedDocumentBinaryObject mimeCode="application/xml"
filename="Verifizierungs_Anhang_PEPPOL.xml">BASE_64_ENCODED_XML</cbc
:EmbeddedDocumentBinaryObject>
    </cac:Attachment>
</cac:AdditionalDocumentReference>
```

Enter the buyer reference (*Leitweg-ID*) “991-55555PEPPO-82” into the invoice (see also section 4.1).

To verify your Peppol ID, send the invoice via Peppol using the Peppol receiver ID “0204:991-55555PEPPO-82”. Please note that verification attachments are currently only valid for 24 hours. However, you can download a new attachment at any time from your user profile page.

It is important that the invoice meets the criteria for the XRechnung standard. All required fields must therefore be filled in. The content of these fields (such as invoice recipient or invoice line items) is not important, since the invoice is only a verification document and will not be sent to a receiving system for payment.

Until your Peppol ID has been verified, the notice “Not verified” will appear next to the Peppol ID field in your user profile (see below):

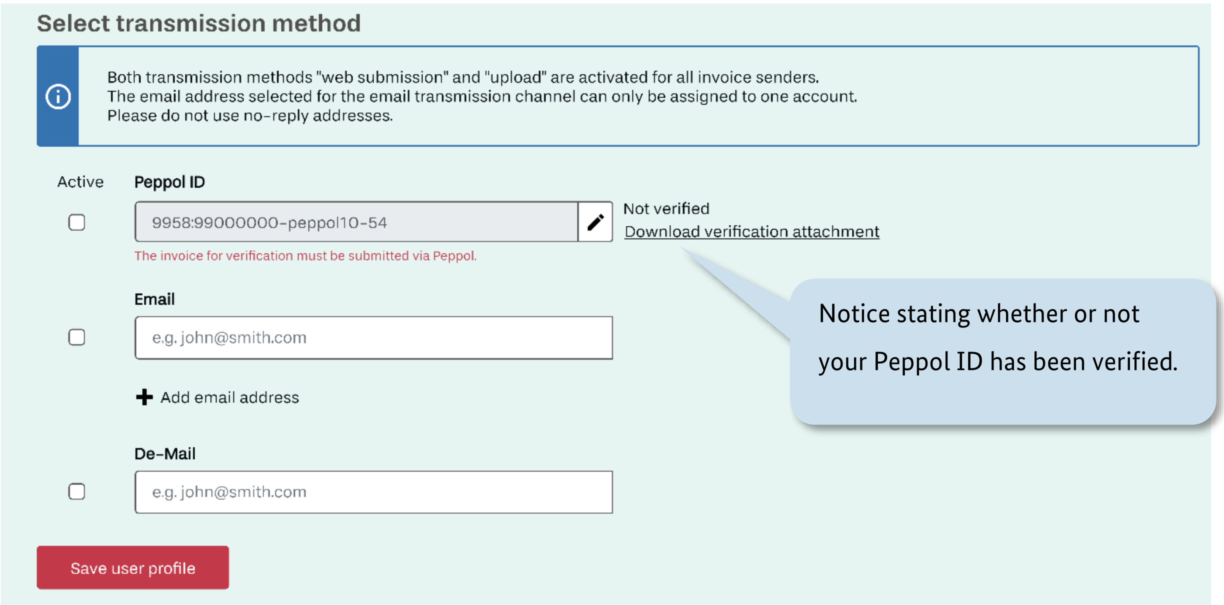


Figure 11.3 Activating Peppol as a transmission method (III/III)

As soon as the verification invoice has been transmitted successfully, your Peppol ID will be recorded as verified in your user profile. After this, any invoices you send via Peppol using your Peppol ID will be displayed on the "View invoice status" page.

You can find more information about Peppol, such as the format of the Peppol ID, at

https://en.e-rechnung-bund.de/transmission-methods/peppol/

12 Testing the ZRE portal

The instructions provided in this guide refer to the live/production environment of the ZRE portal. The live ZRE portal should be used only when creating and submitting **genuine e-invoices**. **Under no circumstances should you use the live ZRE portal for test or practice purposes.**

To **practise** operating the ZRE portal (e.g. to practise creating invoices or managing your user account) you should use the **test environment** of the portal, which can be accessed here: ref.xrechnung.bund.de. In the test environment you can even practise sending invoices via email using the address ref.xrechnung@portal.bund.de (see section 10 on submitting invoices via email). Invoices submitted in the test environment are not processed – and will not be paid!

Please ensure that you always use the live ZRE portal, not the test environment, to submit your genuine invoices.

To use the test environment, you will need to create a separate user account, for which you will need to register as an invoice sender (as with your regular account).

Since the test environment is used for testing and development purposes, it may differ from the live portal.

Any questions?

The website www.en.e-rechnung-bund.de has a lot of helpful information about e-invoicing.

The FAQs section provides answers to many different questions. If you don’t find an answer to your question there, please contact the help desk.

Point of contact for questions about the ZRE:

Help desk:	+49 30 2598 4436
Email:	sendersupport-xrechnung@bdr.de
Contact form:	https://en.e-rechnung-bund.de/contact-request/
Availability:	Monday to Friday from 8:00 to 16:00