

AOAC INTERNATIONAL

Request for Proposals – eQMS/DMS

Electronic Quality Management System/Document Management System for AOAC INTERNATIONAL

A centralized, access-controlled system to manage the document lifecycle—drafting, review, approval, and archiving—of AOAC's documents, including but not limited to standards, methods, policies and procedures, certificates, protocols, reports, and internal standard operating procedures.

Issued by	AOAC INTERNATIONAL
RFP reference	AOAC-eQMS/DMS-2026-01
Issue date	8/13/2026
Notice of intent to bid (optional)	9/02/2026
Questions due	9/02/2026
Proposals due	9/24/2026 5:00 p.m. ET
Submit to	Jonathan Goodwin, jgoodwin@aoac.org
Companion RFP	AOAC Electronic Delivery Platform for Official Methods of Analysis (eOMA). See Section 1.5

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 About AOAC INTERNATIONAL

AOAC INTERNATIONAL is a globally recognized, independent nonprofit (501(c)(3)) association, founded in 1884, that advances food safety and product integrity through standards, validated test methods, and laboratory quality programs. Its vision is global alignment for trusted analytical solutions, serving analytical chemists, microbiologists, laboratories, regulators, and industry worldwide.

1.2 AOAC's Vision and Goals for the eQMS/DMS

The eQMS/DMS manages the lifecycle of important AOAC documents that support or result from the operation of AOAC's programs, including but not limited to the development of AOAC's standards and official methods, certification of proprietary methods and consumables, proficiency testing programs, policies and procedures, internal standard operating procedures, volunteer management documentation, agreements, and AOAC's governance documents – from initial draft through development, review, and approval – prior to and separate from external publication (if applicable).

AOAC is seeking a secure editing and version-control environment that enables AOAC staff and authorized external collaborators to create, review, approve, and manage documents across AOAC's programs and operations. The platform must support collaboration among multiple groups of internal staff and international volunteers (such as working groups, expert review panels, committees, boards, and other authorized contributors) simultaneously on documents. These documents may be developed over periods ranging from days to years, depending on the document type, may serve both internal and external audiences, and may progress through multiple defined review, approval, and consensus workflows as appropriate. Document source formats are addressed by vendors in their proposals (see Section 3.2, Document Management & Control).

The eQMS/DMS has both a behind-the-scenes editing/workflow area – for staff, volunteers, and reviewers – and, for a subset of approved documents AOAC designates, a public-facing view. "Searchable," as used generally in this RFP, refers to the internal repository, available only to authenticated staff, editors, and other specified permissioned users; Section 3.2 (Search & Discovery) separately addresses limited external search-engine indexing of metadata and preview content for the subset of approved documents AOAC designates as public-facing. The eQMS/DMS is not intended to function as a publicly editable wiki, and public comment on documents in progress is out of scope unless AOAC specifically configures a given document for that purpose.

For AOAC's official methods published in the electronic version of *Official Methods of Analysis of AOAC INTERNATIONAL* (eOMA), the eQMS/DMS is a companion system to the eOMA electronic delivery platform (Section 1.5): the eQMS/DMS governs the

drafting, review, and approval process for a standard or method, while eOMA governs its external publication, delivery, and – where applicable – sale once approved. The two systems may be connected (for example, an approved method's version should carry through to eOMA) but do not need to be the same system. Commerce, subscriptions, and the paywall for finished OMA content are addressed in the eOMA RFP, not in this RFP; where a specification below references a paywall, it concerns only optional, document-level download/print/access controls within the eQMS/DMS editorial environment, not commerce.

1.3 Purpose of this RFP

AOAC seeks proposals for an Electronic Quality Management System/Document Management System ("eQMS/DMS") to manage the lifecycle of AOAC's documents – drafting, review, approval, sharing, and archiving. The eQMS/DMS will serve as an easily searchable, centralized repository for accessing the current approved document versions (by all permissioned users) and working/archived versions (based on user permissions and defined roles). The eQMS/DMS must support simultaneous, real-time collaboration by multiple internal and external users (expert groups) and provide strict version control and a comprehensive audit trail.

AOAC will consider both off-the-shelf (commercial) and custom solutions and will evaluate proposals based on total cost of ownership, including, but not limited to, the following aspects. Please see Section 2, Scope of Work, and Section 3 for more detail:

- quality and configurability of role-based access, permissions, and workflow automation;
- collaboration and review tools for multiple concurrent internal and external users;
- version control, audit trail, and document lifecycle management;
- integration with AOAC systems – notably iMIS, Microsoft Entra ID, and eOMA;
- search and discovery for authenticated internal and permissioned external users, with support for AOAC-designated public documents that may be accessed through the AOAC website or other approved public channels;
- security, data backup, and adherence to IT best practices;
- implementation cost, ongoing maintenance and support cost, and support coverage;
- staff and volunteer training and change management;
- potential for future flexibility, scalability, and sustainability.

1.4 Intellectual Property and Confidentiality

AOAC owns and retains all rights, title, and interest in all documents, their content and associated metadata managed within the eQMS/DMS, regardless of which platform hosts them. No part of this RFP process, and no resulting agreement, transfers ownership of that content or metadata to the selected vendor. Any software, configuration, or integration work product developed specifically for AOAC under a resulting agreement will be addressed in the definitive contract, including whether AOAC will own or license that work product.

AOAC will treat each vendor's proposal, pricing, and other submitted materials as confidential and will not disclose one bidder's materials to another bidder. AOAC will share Q&A responses with all participating vendors, as described in Section 6.2.

1.5 Relationship to the eOMA RFP

AOAC is concurrently issuing a separate [RFP for an electronic delivery platform for the Official Methods of Analysis \("eOMA"\)](#) to host and provide public/subscriber access to AOAC's collection of more than 3,000 official methods. Vendors may respond to this eQMS/DMS RFP, the eOMA RFP, or both, and may propose an integrated solution spanning both. Please state clearly which RFP(s) your proposal addresses.

As described in Section 1.2, the two systems have distinct roles: the eQMS/DMS manages the internal, pre-publication lifecycle of a document; eOMA manages its external delivery and sale once approved. AOAC strongly prefers Single Sign-On (SSO) through its enterprise identity provider (e.g., Microsoft Entra ID/Azure AD) or another architecture that integrates appropriately with AOAC's identity and membership systems. iMIS integration for the eQMS/DMS is expected primarily to support access control based on committee, group, or other role assignments managed by AOAC. Where appropriate, the platform should support write-back of limited participation information (such as login or other engagement activity) to iMIS. Detailed document-editing history, version control, approvals, and audit records should remain within the eQMS/DMS rather than in iMIS (see Section 3.2, Compatibility & Integration).

2. Scope of Work

The selected vendor will provide a cloud-hosted platform, plus implementation and ongoing support, covering at minimum:

- Secure, access-controlled document hosting and lifecycle management for AOAC's documents, supporting simultaneous, real-time multi-party collaboration by international volunteers and staff.
- Configurable, role-based access and permissions, with SSO (Microsoft Entra ID) as the primary authentication layer and integration with iMIS to support access control based on committee, group, or other role assignments managed by AOAC.
- Version control, audit trails, e-signature/approval workflows, and automated document routing through defined review and approval stages built into customizable workflow templates.
- Collaboration tools: simultaneous co-authoring, structured commenting and review, and consolidated multi-reviewer feedback.
- Configurable forms, templates, and voting/balloting for document intake and consensus workflows.
- A centralized, internally searchable repository, with limited external search-engine indexing of metadata/preview content for AOAC-designated public-facing approved documents.
- Storage, backup, and archival with AOAC-controlled access to retired/archived versions.
- Security, analytics, implementation, staff/volunteer training, and long-term maintenance.

Detailed, itemized requirements appear in Section 3.

3. Technical and Functional Requirements

The table below sets out AOAC's requirements for the eQMS/DMS. Each requirement uses MUST, SHOULD, or MAY to signal how essential it is, and carries a matching priority:

- Priority 1 – MUST: required for a viable solution.

- Priority 2 – SHOULD: important and strongly preferred, but not essential.
- Priority 3 – MAY: desirable; offered capabilities will help differentiate proposals.

3.1 How to respond

For each requirement, enter one response code and a short explanation in your response copy of this table:

Code	Meaning
F	Fully met out of the box (standard configuration).
C	Met through configuration (no custom code).
D	Met through custom development (describe scope and cost).
P	Planned on a published roadmap (give target date).
N	Not available.

3.2 Requirements

Ref. #	Priority	Specification
Access & Permissions		
A.1	1	The platform MUST support controlled, scalable access for both AOAC staff and external volunteer users (such as working groups, expert review panels, committees, boards and communities), sized for enterprise-scale use with concurrent connections sufficient for simultaneous editing by U.S.- and non-U.S.-based users across multiple collaborative projects. Current estimate is roughly 50+ staff and named external users (for permanent access) and up to an additional several hundred concurrent sessions; final figures to be confirmed with the vendor during discovery.
A.2	1	The platform MUST support access permissions for AOAC staff and authorized external users, customizable by group, individual, and assigned role.

A.3	1	The platform MUST support secure user authentication via username and password with Multi-Factor Authentication and/or Passkeys, consistent with current IT best practices. The platform MUST provide role-based access control with configurable, pre-defined roles (e.g., admin, reviewer, editor) and permissions, including the ability to edit, comment, print, download, and upload documents. AOAC will define the specific roles, groups, and permissions during implementation.
A.4	1	The platform MUST support Single Sign-On (SSO), integrating with Microsoft Entra ID.
A.5	1	The platform MUST support customizable, role-based workflow management, including configurable automated notifications (e.g., email alerts) at the document, folder, or workspace level.
A.6	1	The platform MUST provide global, 24/7 access for authorized users from any location.
A.7	1	The platform MUST support open access to AOAC-designated documents – the ability to make certain documents publicly available (e.g., via a link on AOAC's website or another AOAC-managed site). Vendors should describe whether this is native publishing within the platform or an export/hand-off to another site.
A.8	2	The platform SHOULD support optional, document-level access controls (e.g., blocking download/print/save).
A.9	2	The platform SHOULD provide personalized user profiles with task assignments and alerts.
A.10	3	The platform MAY support self-service user-profile management; vendors should describe whether and how profile data can sync with or be sourced from iMIS (e.g., membership or committee status) to avoid duplicate record-keeping.

A.11	1	The platform MUST enforce a concurrent-user timeout for inactivity, with the timeout period configurable by administrators.
A.12	3	The platform MAY support designating specific timeframes (e.g., quarters or months) that require additional concurrent sessions, for periods of heavier collaborative activity.
A.13	1	The platform MUST provide analytics on access frequency at both the user and document level.
Collaboration		
B.1	1	The platform MUST support collaborative editing for simultaneous co-authoring of documents by multiple named, permissioned users.
B.2	1	The platform MUST provide document comments that allow named and anonymous reviewers to propose changes directly, resolve comments, and view prior iterations. Vendors should describe whether an administrator/editor role approves or rejects proposed changes, and confirm that commenting is restricted to authenticated, permissioned users unless AOAC specifically configures a document for open/public comment.
B.3	2	The platform SHOULD support independent review by multiple reviewers, capturing each reviewer's comments separately while also allowing an administrator to view them combined into a single consolidated view and document.
Compatibility & Integration		
C.1	1	The platform MUST be compatible with PC and Mac desktops and provide responsive performance across desktop, tablet, and mobile devices.
C.2	1	The platform MUST support integration with AOAC's iMIS Association Management Software. AOAC and the selected vendor will jointly define specific integration scenarios, including integration with the iMIS API for, at minimum, writing participation

		or volunteer engagement data to iMIS. iMIS is not expected to serve as the eQMS/DMS access-control system (see Section 1.5).
C.3	2	The platform SHOULD support embedded multimedia (e.g., video).
Document Management & Control		
D.1	1	The platform MUST provide version control and document hierarchy – automated numbering and version tracking that distinguishes drafts, in-review, and approved/published editions – to support traceability and ensure only the authorized version is in circulation.
D.2	1	The platform MUST maintain comprehensive, time-stamped, unalterable audit trails showing who accessed, modified, approved, or commented on a document and when, viewable by AOAC staff/administrators.
D.3	1	The platform MUST support formal e-signature and approval workflows at defined checkpoints, providing a continuous, recorded approval process – including document sign-off, dating, and a formal approval step before release for distribution – rather than separate, disconnected features.
D.4	1	The platform MUST support automated archival that retires older versions from the current/active view while retaining them in a retrievable, access-controlled archive (not permanent deletion).
D.5	1	The platform MUST support offline work on documents for staff and volunteer editorial users (not the public).
D.6	2	The platform SHOULD support document check-out, for staff and volunteer editorial users.
D.7	1	The platform MUST support change-records management, capturing a description of the change, affected documents, approving signature/group, date, and change-effective date.

D.8	2	The platform SHOULD enable comparison of documents for differences and similarities.
D.9	3	The platform MAY provide formatting/content recognition capabilities (e.g., recognition of symbols and equations, in addition to standard responsive rendering across devices); vendors should describe specific capabilities offered.
D.10	2	The platform SHOULD support blinding user/group identity in visible document changes while maintaining an admin-visible record of who made them.
D.11	1	The platform MUST clearly differentiate approved documents from draft and expired/archived documents, whether by status marking, icon, or a separate archive view.
D.12	1	The platform MUST support watermarking and download/print/save controls, configurable at the document level, applicable during the editorial process and/or on the final version as AOAC designates, to prevent unauthorized distribution.
D.13	1	The platform MUST support persistent identifiers (DOIs) for approved, public-facing documents.
D.14	2	The platform SHOULD support automatic DOI generation upon approval, with a manual fallback option.
D.15	2	The platform SHOULD provide publishing capability to post AOAC-designated approved documents to a public-facing view and withdraw them from public view, including the option to schedule publish/unpublish by a specific date and time (e.g., based on pre-defined process timelines or to coincide with an Annual Meeting session or webinar).
D.16	1	The platform MUST support the storage, management, versioning, and workflow of common file formats, including, at a minimum, Microsoft Word, Excel, PDF, JPG, PNG, TXT/RTF, and CSV. Vendors should identify any additional file types supported, including any

		limitations on file size, editing, preview, versioning, or workflow capabilities by file type.
Forms & Templates		
E.1	2	The platform SHOULD support customizable form templates for structured intake (e.g., new-method or new-standard proposal forms, review checklists).
E.2	2	The platform SHOULD support document templates, with defined formatting rules, that can be used to start a new document of a given type (e.g., a new standard) or issued as a task copy to assigned reviewers to complete.
E.3	2	The platform SHOULD support voting on documents among a defined pool of eligible voters (named editors/committee members, not the general public), with visible in-progress/pending/completed status. Vendors should describe whether a passing vote can automatically trigger release/next-stage action or requires a separate administrative step.
E.4	3	The platform MAY support surveys and forms beyond formal balloting.
Search & Discovery		
F.1	1	The platform MUST provide a centralized, easily searchable repository, scoped to authenticated AOAC staff, editors, and other permissioned internal/external users (not the general public), giving access to current approved versions for all such users and to working/archived versions based on permissions.
F.2	1	The platform MUST support metadata and full-text search across current and prior document versions, with metadata maintained at the version level.
F.3	1	For documents that are approved and AOAC-designated as public-facing, the platform MUST allow metadata and, where AOAC designates, document content or preview content to be indexed by

		external search engines (e.g., Google, Bing) without requiring login. AOAC may designate whether the full document or only metadata/preview content is publicly accessible. This applies only to the subset of documents AOAC designates as public-facing (Section 1.2) and is distinct from the internal search described above. Any purchase/paywall behavior for such content is governed by the eOMA RFP and iMIS, not this RFP.
F.4	1	If AI is used in the search solution, no AOAC proprietary or in-progress content should be exposed to a public AI solution except if released officially for public comment. If a public or private AI agent is proposed to support search, the proposal must describe the security controls used to protect AOAC content.
Security		
G.1	1	The platform MUST provide high-level, current-standard cybersecurity capabilities (e.g., encryption at rest and in transit, intrusion detection, regular vulnerability testing) to prevent unauthorized access to or alteration of documents and to protect access-control integrity. Vendors should describe specific security certifications/frameworks followed (e.g., SOC 2).
G.2	1	The platform MUST support compliance with applicable data protection and privacy requirements, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), where applicable. Vendors MUST describe how the platform supports data protection, privacy, data subject rights, data retention, and secure handling of personal data.
G.3	2	The platform SHOULD support recognized accessibility standards and provide an accessible experience for users with disabilities. Vendors should identify the accessibility standards supported and any relevant conformance documentation or certifications (e.g. WCAG 2.1 AA.)
Storage & Backup		

H.1	1	The platform MUST provide storage and backup allowing AOAC to maintain copies of designated documents or categories of documents.
H.2	1	The platform MUST support archive designation with AOAC-staff-controlled access.
H.3	1	The platform MUST provide storage and workflow capacity sufficient for AOAC's document volume and anticipated growth. Vendors should describe any storage tiers (if applicable), maximum supported file size, storage scalability, and any associated pricing as AOAC's document repository grows.
Vendor Support		
I.1	1	The platform vendor MUST provide implementation and launch support.
I.2	1	The platform vendor MUST provide long-term support and maintenance (security and other updates) and MUST specify support-hours coverage (e.g., business hours Eastern US time, or 24/7) and response-time SLAs.
Workflow & Automation		
J.1	1	The platform MUST provide configurable workflow management to meet AOAC's process requirements and support different workflows based on document type, process, or business need. The platform MUST support automation, combining manual, rules-based, dynamic, and advanced workflow types as needed. Vendors should describe who (editors vs. administrators) can create or modify workflows.
J.2	1	The platform MUST provide automated, triggered alerts and task-assignment email notifications and reminders, with defined deadlines and acknowledgment records, directed to the appropriate role (editor/staff/admin) at each workflow step.

J.3	1	The platform MUST provide configurable, automated document routing that sequentially routes documents based on defined roles for review and approval, with built-in escalation reminders.
J.4	1	The platform MUST support expiration of documents with an automated alert system. Vendors should describe how expiration is displayed on a document (status/icon) and how it relates to version control and archival.
J.5	1	The platform MUST allow authorized AOAC users to create, save, modify, and reuse workflow templates that can be made available organization-wide. Workflow templates MUST support different workflow requirements based on document type, process, or business need, including configurable review, approval, permissions, routing, notifications, and required steps.

4. Pricing and Project Timeline

Project timeline. The selected platform must be fully implemented and live by September 2027. Vendors must provide a project plan with milestones for implementation. AOAC may provide penalties for these milestones at its discretion.

Pricing. Provide complete, transparent pricing so AOAC can assess the total cost of ownership over a five-year period. At minimum, break out:

- One-time implementation, configuration, and any data/document migration costs, including any development identified in your Section 3 response, and projected five-year rates and costs of supporting that development.
- Recurring license or subscription fees, and the basis for them (e.g., per seat, concurrent users, storage volume).
- Hosting, storage, and bandwidth costs, and how they scale.
- Support and maintenance fees by tier, including security updates, backups, uptime/SLA commitments, security monitoring, and firewalls.
- Assumptions, exclusions, and annual price-escalation terms.

Vendors **MUST** describe end-of-contract export capabilities, including delivery of all documents, metadata, version history, audit trails, user accounts, and workflow records in non-proprietary formats, along with transition support.

Where relevant, indicate licensing models offered (e.g., concurrent vs. named licensing) and any pricing efficiencies if AOAC also selects your eOMA solution.

5. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on overall value to AOAC, not lowest price alone. Among the factors AOAC will consider:

- How well the solution meets the requirements.
- Total cost of ownership, both implementation and ongoing maintenance, and AOAC's ability to operate the platform long-term.
- Solution maturity, overall approach, and implementation risks.
- Ability to meet AOAC's target completion date.
- Integration with AOAC systems (notably SSO/Entra ID and iMIS) and, where proposed, cooperation with AOAC's eOMA platform.
- Security, reliability, and support.
- Vendor stability and relevant references, particularly with consensus-based standards development or similar volunteer-driven review processes.

6. How to Apply

6.1 Timeline

AOAC intends to follow the schedule below, aligned with the concurrent eOMA RFP timeline. All dates are placeholders and may be revised. Note that the AOAC Board approves overall funding for the initiative; it does not select the vendor.

Milestone	Target date
RFP issued	8/13/2026
Notice of intent to bid (optional)	9/02/2026

Vendor questions due (written, by email)	9/02/2026
AOAC responses/addenda issued	9/15/2026
Proposals due	9/24/2026 5:00 p.m. ET
Shortlist notified; demonstrations scheduled	10/07/2026
Vendor demonstrations	October – early November 2026
Pricing in hand for Board review	Late November 2026
Selection and contract negotiation	November 30, 2026
Board approval of project funding	Early December 2026
Anticipated project kickoff	January 2027

6.2 Questions

All questions must be submitted in writing to Jonathan Goodwin (jgoodwin@aoac.org) by the date above. Answers will be shared with all participating vendors. Vendors should not contact other AOAC staff or volunteers regarding this RFP.

Vendors must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest in their proposal.

6.3 What to include in your proposal

Proposals should be concise and organized in the following order. If third parties will be involved in the solution, please include references and required background, as well as an indication of sections where a 3rd party will participate.

- **Executive summary** – your understanding of AOAC's needs and your recommended approach (whether off-the-shelf, configured, or custom).
- **Company profile** – background, relevant scale, and similar deployments (especially scientific/standards organizations, consensus-based standards development, or accreditation bodies).

- **Solution description** — architecture, hosting, and how the solution meets the requirements.
- **Completed requirements response** — the Section 3 table with a response code (see Section 3.1) and a brief note for each line.
- **Implementation plan** — approach, timeline, migration of any existing documents/records, and AOAC resource expectations.
- **Integration approach** — specifically SSO/Entra ID and iMIS; and, where applicable, how you would integrate or cooperate with AOAC's eOMA platform.
- **Security and compliance** — hosting, data protection, backups, uptime/SLA commitments, security monitoring, and firewalls.
- **Support model** — implementation support, post-implementation support, ongoing support tiers, SLAs, support-hours coverage, and maintenance.
- **Pricing** — a complete cost breakdown covering implementation, recurring license or subscription fees, hosting, and support/maintenance (itemized per Section 4).
- **References** — at least three comparable client projects and outcomes, with length of relationship indicated.

7. Attachments

- Attachment A: Vendor response template (the Section 3 requirements table with response-code and pricing columns; also serves as the detailed specification).