

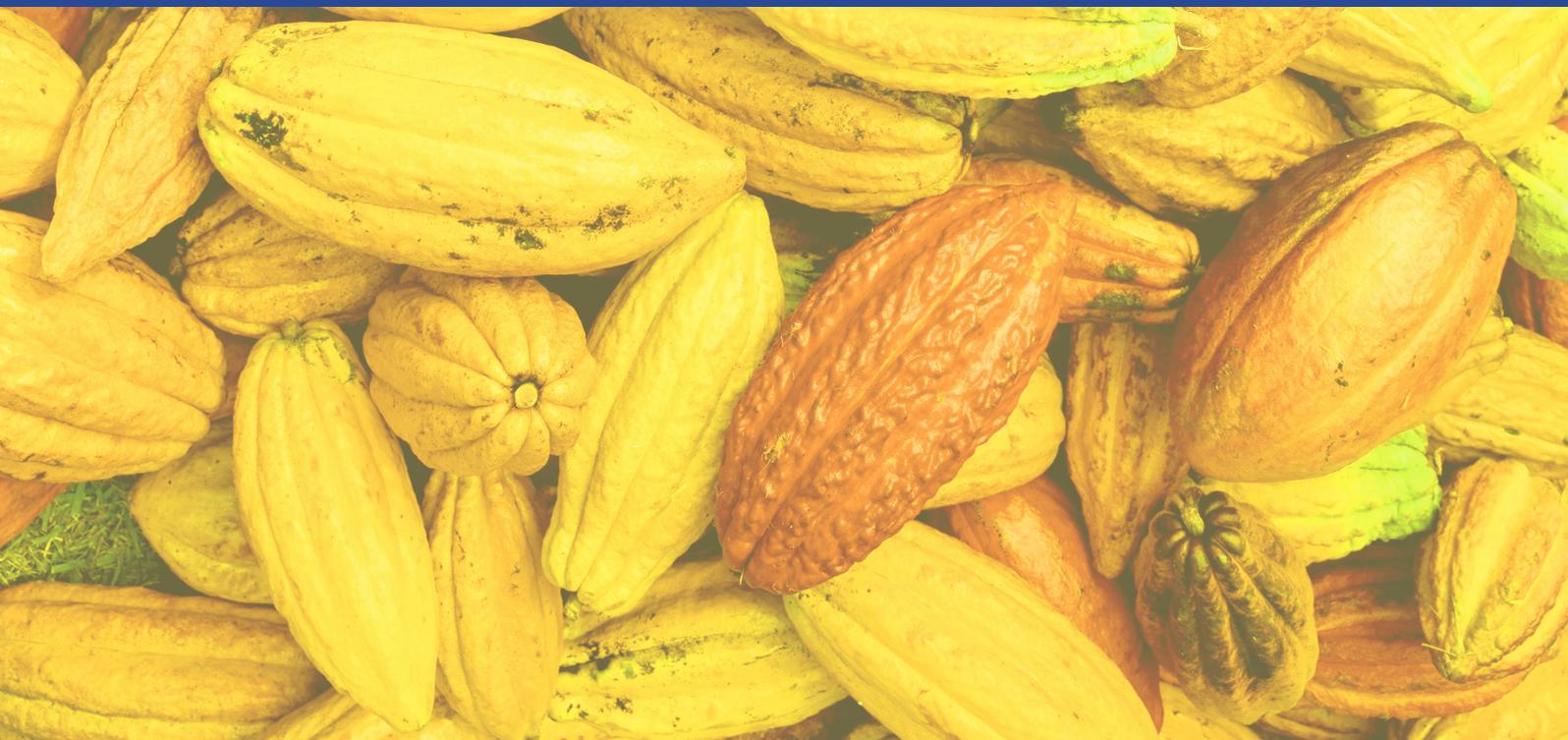


# The Swedish Market

## Cocoa



**Open Trade  
Gate Sweden**  
National Board of Trade



## The purpose of the market study

The purpose of this market study is to offer a comprehensive guide for companies that are interested in entering the Swedish market for cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives. It aims to offer valuable insights and support actionable strategies for exporters of cocoa and cocoa derivatives to establish a foothold in Sweden. The study provides an overview of the Swedish market in this sector, outlines important trends, details regulatory requirements and offers guidance on how to identify and secure business partners.

This market study is intended for companies in low- and middle-income countries interested in entering the Swedish market for cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives.

*Note: The terms cacao and cocoa both refer to products of Theobroma cacao, but they are used differently along the value chain. “Cacao” is preferred in the specialty and fine-flavour segment to highlight origin, genetics, fermentation quality and craftsmanship, and is often used when referring to premium or minimally processed beans. “Cocoa”, by contrast, is the standard term in the mainstream industry and in regulatory, trade and technical contexts, covering commercial beans and processed products such as cocoa paste, butter and powder. Importantly, all international trade classifications (HS codes) continue to use the term “cocoa”, regardless of quality segment.*

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## Get to know the Swedish cocoa market

### Sweden's cocoa imports

Sweden's confectionery and snacks market is projected to reach SEK 56 billion in 2025<sup>1</sup>, growing at 4.51 per cent annually through 2030. This includes chocolate and sugar confectionery, ice cream and sweet and savoury snacks.

Within this broader market, cocoa and cocoa preparations (HS code 18) represent approximately SEK 8 billion, roughly 14 per cent of the total confectionery market value, at 101,000 tonnes in 2024. This proportion reflects cocoa's role as both a finished product category (chocolate bars and cocoa powder for consumers) and a key ingredient for manufacturers across multiple confectionery segments.

The cocoa market exhibits distinct dynamics compared to overall confectionery growth. Between 2020 and 2024, the value of Sweden's cocoa imports increased by 60.5 per cent, while volumes grew only marginally by 3.5 per cent. This 57-percentage-point gap between value and volume growth indicates that expansion has been driven predominantly by higher global cocoa prices and a structural shift towards premium, higher-value cocoa products, rather than by increased physical consumption.

Direct sourcing from origin countries remains limited but strategically important. Supplies from producing countries in Africa, Central and South America and Asia are concentrated in specific segments, especially cocoa beans (HS 1801) and small but growing volumes of cocoa paste (HS 1803). Countries such as Peru, Ecuador and Guatemala already appear as direct suppliers in Sweden's trade statistics, alongside a few Asian origins such as the Philippines and Thailand.

However, most of Sweden's cocoa imports arrive from other EU countries (primarily the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium), where processors transform cocoa beans into semi-finished and finished cocoa products. These activities typically include cleaning and roasting beans, followed by winnowing, grinding into cocoa liquor and further processing into cocoa butter and cocoa powder. Some European businesses also import and re-export cocoa beans to other markets without processing, functioning as trading intermediaries.

The most relevant product groups within **cocoa and cocoa preparations** (HS 18) on which the study focuses are:

- **Cocoa beans, whole or broken, raw or roasted:** (HS 1801) – while cocoa beans represent a large global commodity market, Sweden's direct imports remain relatively small. However, this segment is growing and strongly linked to premium bean-to-bar makers and specialty chocolate producers.
- **Cocoa shells, husks, skins and other cocoa waste:** (HS 1802) – small but rapidly growing niche driven by increasing demand for infusions.
- **Cocoa paste, whether or not defatted:** (HS 1803, including 180310 and 180320) – stable volumes, sharply rising values and important for industrial chocolate manufacturing.

<sup>1</sup> Statista, [Confectionery & Snacks- Sweden](#)

- **Cocoa butter, fat and oil:** (HS 1804) – high-value semi-finished ingredient used in chocolate, cosmetics and many other applications in the food industry.
- **Cocoa powder, not containing sugar or other sweetening matter:** (HS 1805) – key for bakery, beverages and high-protein snacks, with good growth.
- **Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa:** (HS 1806) – the largest segment by far, driven by intra-EU trade with niche opportunities for origin chocolate brands and couvertures.

The specific cocoa products imported into Sweden between 2020 and 2024, their share in total cocoa imports and the growth registered in this period are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Swedish imports of cocoa/derivatives, 2020–2024, value in SEK millions of tonnes**

Product	2020		2022		2024		Share of HS18 in 2024 in value	Growth 2020–2024 in value
	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume		
<b>HS code 18:</b> <b>Cocoa and cocoa preparations</b>	4,585,812	97,580	5,773,967	114,710	8,033,820	100,992	100 %	60.5 %
<b>HS code 1801:</b> <b>Cocoa beans, whole or broken, raw or roasted</b>	2,900	44	5,307	111	7,363	83	0.1 %	132.5 %
<b>HS code 1802:</b> <b>Cocoa shells, husks, skins and other cocoa waste</b>	542	6	752	36	1,067	97	0.05 %	78.8 %
<b>HS code 1803:</b> <b>Cocoa paste, whether or not defatted</b>	163,345	4,477	170,765	4,935	500,246	4,529	6.3 %	183.4 %
<b>HS code 180310:</b> <b>Not defatted</b>	160,692	4,394	176,539	4,793	481,349	4,446	6.2 %	185.3 %
<b>HS code 180320:</b> <b>Wholly or partially defatted</b>	2,643	83	5,652	142	4,933	82	0.1 %	71.4 %
<b>HS code 1804:</b> <b>Cocoa butter, fat and oil</b>	441,610	8,121	407,852	8,168	1,115,364	7,628	13.9 %	131.4 %
<b>HS code 1805:</b> <b>Cocoa powder, not containing added sugar or other sweetening matter</b>	132,102	4,438	216,430	6,140	392,631	7,802	4.9 %	172.4 %
<b>HS code 1806:</b> <b>Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa</b>	3,845,323	80,494	4,967,220	95,320	6,012,226	80,853	74.8 %	43.3

Source: ITC Trademap, 2025

## Sweden's cocoa imports per product group

Several cocoa product groups offer interesting opportunities to suppliers from producing regions in Africa, Central and South America and Asia, based on:

- Existing imports into Sweden;
- Growth in import volume and value;
- Diversity of supplying countries;
- Degree of direct sourcing from producing countries versus EU re-export hubs.

### Cocoa beans

Cocoa beans represent a small but expanding segment of Sweden's cocoa imports. In 2024, Sweden imported around 83 tonnes of cocoa beans, valued at approximately SEK 7.3 million, accounting for just 0.1 per cent of the total cocoa import value. Despite its small size, this category registered strong growth, with values increasing by 132.5 per cent and volumes by 88.6 per cent between 2020 and 2024.

Sweden's cocoa bean supplies can be divided into two groups:

1. **EU re-exports:** Led by Denmark and the Netherlands, which together account for around 47 per cent of bean imports in most years.
2. **Direct supplies from producing countries:** Led by Peru, which in 2024 accounted for 42 per cent of Sweden's direct bean imports in both value and volume, followed by smaller volumes from Guatemala and Thailand.

Peru and Guatemala are known sources of fine flavour cocoa, used in premium chocolate, bean-to-bar production and specialty applications. This suggests Swedish demand for direct bean imports is linked to increasing demand from chocolate brands in Sweden for high-quality, traceable and origin-specific cocoa, rather than bulk commodity trade.

### Cocoa shells, husks, skins and other cocoa waste

Cocoa shells, husks, skins and other cocoa waste are a small category. Between 2020 and 2024, Swedish imports increased from 6 tonnes to 97 tonnes, with values rising by 78.8 per cent to SEK 1.1 million in 2024. However, this product group represents only 0.05 per cent of total cocoa import value, but it reflects a clear trend towards the valorisation of cocoa by-products.

Supplies to Sweden are currently dominated by Poland (52 per cent), Denmark (18 per cent) and Germany (17 per cent), indicating that most cocoa shell, husks and skins products are sourced from European processors who upcycle by-products from cocoa bean processing, rather than directly from producing countries. Cocoa shells and husks are becoming more popular in Europe as infusions, due to their versatility and multi-functional properties in tea blends and infusions, bakery and cereal products for added fibre and cocoa aroma, as well as other "upcycled food" applications.

For origin processors in Africa, Latin America and Asia, this segment is still small in Sweden. Nevertheless, it points to long-term opportunities to supply upcycled cocoa ingredients, provided suppliers can meet food safety and contaminant requirements while at the same time developing partnerships with European brands working on circular economy concepts.

## Cocoa paste

Cocoa paste is a central semi-finished ingredient in Sweden's chocolate and confectionery industry. From a trade and customs perspective, cocoa paste is primarily classified according to its HS code designation:

- HS 180310 (Cocoa paste, not defatted, which accounts for 98 per cent of imports).
- HS 180320 (Cocoa paste, wholly or partly defatted, which is negligible in volume and value).

In practice, the cocoa industry trades non-defatted cocoa paste, as it retains the natural cocoa butter required for chocolate manufacturing.

In 2024, imports of the entire category reached 4,529 tonnes, valued at approximately SEK 500 million, representing 6.3 per cent of total cocoa import value. Between 2020 and 2024, the value of cocoa paste imports increased by 183.4 per cent, while volumes grew by only 1.2 per cent. This sharp divergence indicates a significant rise in unit prices, driven primarily by higher global cocoa prices and, to a lesser extent, by a gradual shift toward higher-value and specialty cocoa paste.

The market is dominated by European grinders:

- Belgium accounts for about 69 per cent of cocoa paste import value in 2024;
- The Netherlands represents roughly 29 per cent;
- Spain contributes around 1 per cent;
- France and Germany together account for less than 1 per cent of import value.

Direct supplies from producing countries are visible but very small: Ecuador, India and Guatemala together account for under 1 per cent of import value. This shows that Sweden's cocoa paste is almost entirely sourced from European grinders.

For exporters, cocoa paste can be an interesting product to explore, especially if they have grinding capacity, can supply consistent quality and are able to work with European and Swedish partners on tailored specifications for chocolate or other applications.

## Cocoa butter, fat and oil

Cocoa butter, fat and oil is a high-value ingredient used extensively in chocolate, and to a lesser extent in cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. In 2024, Sweden imported around 7,628 tonnes of cocoa butter, valued at SEK 1.1 billion, making it the second most valuable cocoa product after chocolate preparations (HS 1806). The cocoa butter category accounted for 13.9 per cent of total cocoa import value.

Between 2020 and 2024, the value of cocoa butter imports increased by 131.4 per cent, while volumes declined by 6.1 per cent, highlighting a significant increase in market prices and a shift towards higher-value butter.

The market is dominated by a few large European suppliers:

- The Netherlands accounts for around 73 per cent of Sweden's cocoa butter import value in 2024;

- Germany and France have become increasingly important, especially in recent years, with sharp growth in export values to Sweden;
- All other suppliers, including Belgium, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Canada, Poland and Italy, each represent well below 1 per cent of import value.

This pattern indicates that most of the cocoa butter used in Sweden is produced by large grinding companies in Western Europe, which import beans and then export butter as part of a wider product portfolio. One chocolate manufacturer noted that cocoa butter prices are very high, making full-container purchases impractical given their production volumes. As a result, the company relies on European suppliers that can offer smaller lot sizes and more flexible logistics solutions.

For exporters in producing countries, cocoa butter remains a strategic but demanding product, requiring significant investment in processing, quality control and food safety management. Most origin processors cannot offer deodorised butter, as it requires specialised equipment rarely available outside of Europe. Consequently, Swedish buyers tend to rely on long-term contracts with large European suppliers, especially for standard and deodorised cocoa butter.

### **Cocoa powder**

Cocoa powder is a key ingredient for Sweden's bakery, beverage and food manufacturing sectors, including bakery and confectionery products, drinking chocolate and cocoa beverages, high-protein and sports nutrition products, and breakfast cereals and snack bars. In 2024, imports reached 7,802 tonnes, valued at SEK 392 million, representing 4.9 per cent of total cocoa import value. Between 2020 and 2024, volumes increased by 75.8 per cent, while values rose by 172.4 per cent, indicating both strong demand growth and rising prices.

The main suppliers of cocoa powder to Sweden, in descending order: The Netherlands is the main supplier, accounting for about 54 per cent of Sweden's cocoa powder import value in 2024; Germany follows with roughly 17 per cent; Norway ranks third with approximately 14 per cent.

Together, these three countries supply 85 per cent of Sweden's cocoa powder by value. France adds just over 9 per cent, while Austria and Belgium contribute around 2 per cent each. Smaller suppliers including Denmark, Spain, Poland, Italy, Lithuania, Lebanon, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Finland, Türkiye, the United States, Thailand, Switzerland and Guatemala each account for less than 1 per cent of the total. This pattern shows that most of Sweden's cocoa powder is produced from beans processed in Europe.

### **Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa**

Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa is by far the largest cocoa category in Sweden's imports, accounting for around 75–80 per cent of total HS 18 value and volume. This category includes tablets, chocolate bars, filled products, cocoa-based spreads and cocoa derivatives/semi-finished products such as couvertures. Between 2020 and 2024, import values increased from SEK 3.84 billion

to SEK 6 billion (~43 per cent increase), while volumes remained flat at 80 thousand tonnes, showing that growth has largely come from higher prices and premiumisation rather than higher consumption volumes.

This segment is strongly driven by intra-European trade:

- Germany is the leading supplier, representing about 21 per cent of Sweden's HS 1806 import value in 2024;
- Finland and Poland contribute roughly 11 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively;
- The Netherlands accounts for about 9.6 per cent;
- Belgium and Denmark account for around 8 per cent each.

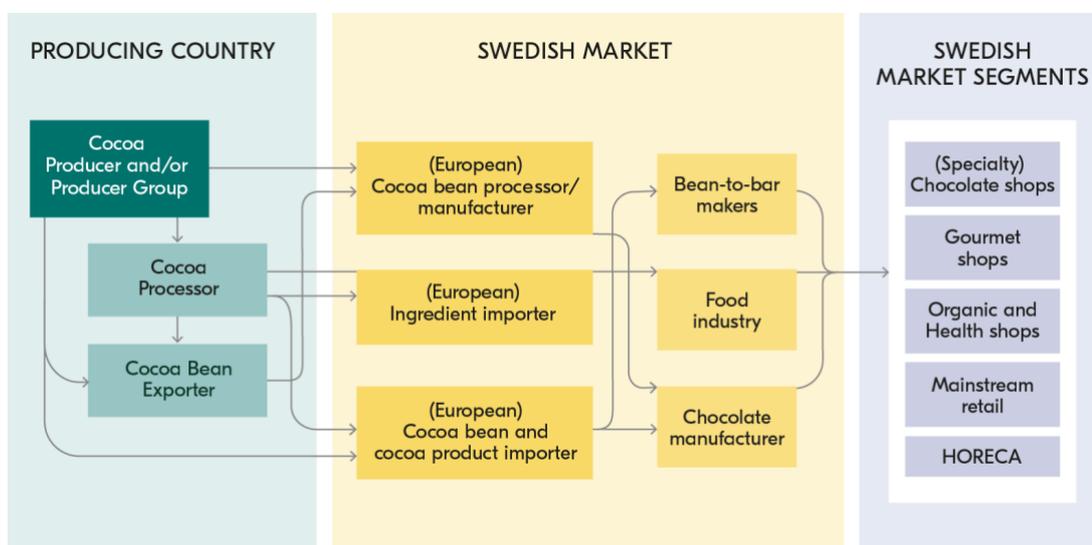
Together, these six countries supply around 68–70 per cent of Sweden's chocolate and cocoa preparations by value. Additional important suppliers include France (~5.6 per cent), Norway (~4.9 per cent), Lithuania (~4.5 per cent) and Italy (~4.3 per cent). Non-EU suppliers such as Thailand, the United States, Canada, Argentina, India, China and various smaller origins like the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and South Africa play a limited role, usually in specific product niches or speciality segments.

## Understanding the market structure

### Market channels

As an exporter, you can use different channels to bring your cocoa and cocoa derivatives to the Swedish market. Market entry will vary according to the quality of your cocoa beans and derivatives, as well as your supply capacities. In general, direct imports to Scandinavian countries are less common compared to some other European countries. Most cocoa beans and derivatives that enter Sweden are re-exported from, or processed in, other European countries, such as the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France and Switzerland.

**Figure 1. Market channels and segments for cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives into Sweden**



Source: Own elaboration, 2025

### Cocoa bean processors/grinders

Large processors/grinders source their cocoa beans directly from producing countries. They process the raw material into cocoa paste, cocoa butter, cocoa powder and often couvertures, which they distribute to the confectionery, food, cosmetic and sometimes pharmaceutical industries throughout Europe. Some cocoa processors also manufacture end products to supply directly to the retail or food service sector.

The large multinational Barry Callebaut has processing plants and sales offices in Sweden. However, Swedish companies sourcing high-quality and organic-certified cocoa derivatives commonly work via processors in other European countries such as Tradin Organic/Crown of Holland (the Netherlands) and PRONATEC (Switzerland).

### Cocoa bean and cocoa derivative importers

Importers of cocoa beans normally handle large quantities and have direct contacts with exporters in producing countries. In most cases, importers have long-standing

relationships with their suppliers. Sometimes cocoa bean importers source and distribute cocoa derivatives to the chocolate confectionery and other industries as well. Another important type of importer sourcing and distributing cocoa derivatives are general ingredient importers, which do not handle cocoa specifically, but also ingredients such as dried fruit, edible nuts and other ingredients.

There are no major cocoa bean importers in Sweden. Most high-quality chocolate makers in Sweden will buy their cocoa beans from other European specialty cocoa importers, such as Uncommon Cacao (USA/Netherlands), Daarnhouwer, Crafting Markets (the Netherlands) and Silva Cacao (Belgium). These specialised importers usually handle smaller quantities and often work directly with producers and farmer-led organisations.

Bodén & Lindeberg is one of Sweden's main natural ingredient importers, having cocoa products as part of their portfolio and supplying them to the bakery, confectionery and foodstuff industries in Scandinavia. Other important ingredient importers in Europe supplying cocoa derivatives sourced from cocoa-producing countries include Rhumveld, DO-IT Organic (the Netherlands), Care Naturkost, Rapunzel (Germany), among others.

### **Chocolate manufacturers**

Chocolate manufacturers produce finished chocolate and cocoa-based products under their own brands or for private-label clients, and in some cases also supply cocoa derivatives to other industries. They can be defined as having a processing capacity of 200 tonnes or more<sup>2</sup>. Their products typically use blends from multiple origins (or sometimes single origins) allowing them to tailor flavour profiles and innovate across diverse market segments.

Examples of chocolate manufacturers in Europe producing chocolate and derivatives from cocoa beans (i.e., with cocoa-grinding activities): PRONATEC (Switzerland), ICAM (Italy) and August Storck (Germany). In Sweden, larger-scale manufacturers such as Marabou and Cloetta usually do not produce chocolate from the cocoa bean, but rather from derivatives such as cocoa paste and couvertures sourced from larger cocoa processors such as Barry Callebaut.

### **Craft chocolate makers**

Chocolate makers are specialty producers that transform high-quality cocoa beans into chocolate, often working with small volumes sourced from carefully selected origins. They emphasise flavour, craftsmanship and storytelling, frequently paying premium prices for beans and selling their products through high-end or specialised retail channels. Some also supply exceptional couvertures to chefs, chocolatiers and premium hospitality clients. Examples of specialised chocolate makers in Sweden include bean-to-bar companies such as Malmö Chokladfabrik, Standout Chocolate, Nordic Chocolate and Svenska Kakaobolaget.

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<sup>2</sup> Chocolate Institute, [Sizing the craft chocolate market](#)

Chocolate makers usually have a processing capacity of less than 200 tonnes per year, although the average company processes much lower volumes<sup>3</sup>. Swedish chocolate makers interviewed for this study typically import 6–8 tonnes of beans annually, which is far below the volumes that make direct container shipments economically viable. Most prefer working through European distributors (such as Crafting Markets, Cocoa Supply, Uncommon Cacao, Daarnhouwer and Silva Cacao) who maintain warehouses in Europe, handle logistics and aggregate smaller orders. Despite these challenges, some chocolate makers will still import cocoa beans directly from single estates, cooperatives or selected origins such as OFF Chocolate, which works with cacao grown on its own farm in Fiji, allowing full control over quality, traceability and origin identity, albeit at small scale.

Many craft chocolate makers in Sweden, such as Chokladfabrik, will not produce chocolate from the cocoa beans, and use cocoa paste or couvertures from other European companies such as Valrhona and Felchlin. Others will source cocoa beans from some origins and for some products, usually more premium, but combined with cocoa derivatives such as cocoa paste from European manufacturers such as PRONATEC and Crown of Holland for other products.

## Market segments

The Swedish food market is generally divided between retail (65 per cent) and food service/catering (35 per cent), and this same structure applies to chocolate and cocoa-based products. Within these two channels, chocolate is further segmented by price point, product positioning, flavour and origin profiles, sustainability claims, and overall consumer expectations. Understanding how the chocolate market is structured is essential, because each product tier relies on different cocoa qualities, supply chain models and buyer requirements.

From the perspective of the chocolate market itself, Sweden can be analysed through three major quality-based segments commonly used in Scandinavia: low-end, middle-range and high-end. These segments align closely with retail dynamics, with the majority of chocolate sold through supermarkets and convenience stores, while smaller volumes move through delicatessens, premium boutiques and online specialty platforms.

- **Low-End Segment (Mass Market/Mainstream Retail):** At the base of the market are mainstream chocolate products. These are large-scale brands and private labels found predominantly in ICA, Coop and Axfood retail groups. Products in this segment typically contain lower cocoa content, rely heavily on bulk West African cocoa and feature standard sustainability labels such as Rainforest Alliance, which is widely used across Scandinavian retailers. Price sensitivity is high, and product differentiation is limited. Supermarkets capture the bulk of this segment, reflecting Sweden's strong reliance on major retail chains for chocolate purchases.

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<sup>3</sup> Chocolate Institute, [Sizing the craft chocolate market](#)

- **Middle-Range Segment (Premium Supermarket Chocolate):** The middle segment consists of better-quality branded products and premium private labels, often positioned around higher cocoa percentages, origin-based marketing or organic and Fairtrade claims. Storytelling and origin become more visible here, not necessarily for flavour complexity, but as signals of quality and responsible sourcing. Swedish retailers are increasingly developing their own premium chocolate brands featuring origin blends, organic certification or Fairtrade positioning. These products remain accessible to mainstream consumers but command higher prices due to perceived quality upgrades.
- **High-End Segment (Specialty, Bean-to-Bar, Single Origin):** This segment is small in volume but influential in terms of trends. Sweden has a growing ecosystem of craft and bean-to-bar chocolate makers such as Malmö Chokladfabrik, Svenska Kakaobolaget, Electrify Chocolate, Höganäs chocolate AB and Standout Chocolate, who work with fine-flavour cocoa, strong transparency standards and direct relationships with specialty importers or producers. These products are mainly sold in specialty shops, online premium retailers, delicatessens and at chocolate festivals, and appeal to consumers willing to pay differentiated prices for craftsmanship, flavour and traceability. Retail prices in this segment are substantially higher, reflecting both cocoa quality and small-batch manufacturing.

**Table 2. Chocolate in different market segments in Sweden**

Segment	Product	Picture	Retail price SEK/kg
<b>Low-end</b>	Cloetta: Mörk Choklad (100 grams), Rainforest Alliance-certified  SEK 28.95		SEK 289.50 per kg
<b>Mid-range</b>	Egualé: 70% Bolivia (100 grams), Organic and Fairtrade- certified  SEK 60.00		SEK 600 per kg
<b>High-end</b>	Nordic Chocolate: 70% Nicaragua (90 grams) Organic-certified  SEK 120.00		SEK 1 333.33 per kg

## Keep up with trends

### Market trends

Swedish cocoa trends reflect growing consumer demand for health-focused, transparent and premium products. Functional positioning, wellness niches and origin storytelling drive differentiation, while Fairtrade and EU Organic certifications have become baseline market requirements. Premiumisation strategies emphasise packaging innovation, exotic flavours and artisanal retail experiences.

### Sugar reduction drives demand for “free-from” chocolate

The European functional food market was valued at SEK 568 billion in 2023 and is projected to grow 6.4 per cent annually, reaching SEK 995 billion by 2033.<sup>4</sup> Sweden is particularly well-positioned: high purchasing power, strong wellness awareness and consumer demand for convenient yet nutritious food formats create ideal conditions for functional ingredients. Consumers increasingly view cocoa as a functional health ingredient rather than just an indulgence.

The Nordic Nutrition Recommendations 2023 report recommends limiting added and free sugars to below 10 per cent of energy intake.<sup>5</sup> In response, major Swedish retailers such as Axfood have committed to reducing salt, sugar and unnecessary additives across their private-label ranges.

These developments create demand for lower-sugar chocolate products and drive the "free-from" movement. Swedish company Nick's produces sugar-free chocolate bars using natural sweeteners such as steviol, marketed as "guilt-free indulgence" with transparent nutrition labelling. This trend reflects broader consumer expectations that chocolate can satisfy cravings while aligning with health-conscious lifestyles.

### Cocoa derivatives positioned as versatile superfood ingredients

Beyond chocolate bars, Swedish consumers are increasingly exploring cocoa derivatives positioned as nutritious superfood ingredients. The global cocoa nibs' market was valued around SEK 14 billion, with a 7.9 per cent yearly growth forecast, driven by health-conscious consumers seeking the antioxidant and magnesium benefits of minimally processed cocoa.<sup>6</sup>

Cacao nibs and powder are incorporated into granolas, oatmeal, smoothies, yoghurt toppings and baked goods. Brands such as Svenska Kakaobolaget market cacao nibs as a healthy energy-boosting snack while online retailers such as Matspar and Rawfoodshop sell nibs in snack bars, cereals, spreads and beverages.

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<sup>4</sup> Market Data Forecast, [Europe Functional food market](#)

<sup>5</sup> Nordic Co-operation, [Nordic nutrition recommendation 2023](#)

<sup>6</sup> Cognitive Market research & consulting, [Cacao Market Analysis 2026](#)

### **Rising demand for cocoa from the bakery, pastry, and HORECA sectors**

Cocoa powder is widely used across HORECA (hotels, restaurants, catering), pastry, and bakery sectors, making it a versatile ingredient beyond retail consumer markets. The global cocoa powder market size was SEK 236 billion in 2024 and is expected to grow 4.9 per cent annually, reaching SEK 398 billion by 2035.<sup>7</sup> Europe accounts for 30 per cent of this market, making it the second-largest regional consumer. While Sweden-specific market data is unavailable, several factors suggest Swedish consumers are actively participating in European growth trends: high per-capita purchasing power, strong wellness culture and established infrastructure for premium food products.

### **Ceremonial cacao emerges as wellness-driven premium niche**

Although still a small niche, ceremonial cacao in Sweden sits at the intersection of wellness, premiumisation and the perceived benefits of minimally processed cocoa, demonstrating how pure cocoa products are finding market routes beyond traditional chocolate.

The proliferation of Swedish suppliers, wellness practitioners and dedicated brands indicates concrete market development, rather than isolated efforts:

- Swedish bean-to-bar maker Svenska Kakaobolaget markets a dedicated ceremonial cacao range, with 100 per cent cocoa paste from sustainably grown Tanzanian beans, tested for heavy metals and produced without pesticides, explicitly marketed “for cacao rituals” and conscious enjoyment.
- Online retailers such as Wild Cacao Collective, Forest Spirit Shop and eco-marketplaces such as Gryningen and Green Little Heart offer 100 per cent ceremonial cacao blocks from Guatemala, Colombia and Peru, often sourced from women’s cooperatives and organic farms.
- Wellness practitioners and yoga studios across Sweden, such as Nina Medicina, Luna Cacao, Altromondo Yoga and My Yoga Room integrate cacao ceremonies with breathwork, sound healing and retreats, framing cacao as a “heart-opening plant medicine”.
- A newer wave of brands, such as ARK of Sweden, blend ceremonial cacao with adaptogens and nootropics such as ashwagandha, lion’s mane and brahmi.

### **Premium chocolate grows through innovation and exclusive retail**

The European premium chocolate market has been growing at roughly 7–9 per cent annually, driven by interest in gourmet ingredients and upscale presentation. Consumers show greater willingness to pay for high-quality, artisanal experiences.<sup>8</sup>

Swedish manufacturers use four key strategies to capture premium positioning: creative packaging design, distinctive Nordic flavour profiles, exclusive retail channels and transparent ingredient labelling.

<sup>7</sup> Global Market Insights, [Cocoa Powder market size](#)

<sup>8</sup> Mordor Intelligence, [Europe Premium chocolate market size & share analysis](#)

### **Packaging as experiential storytelling**

Packaging has become a key premiumisation tool, transforming unwrapping into a sensory experience. When expanding into mainstream retail, Malmö Chokladfabrik introduced an ultra-premium bean-to-bar range with couture-inspired packaging, with a minimal-plastic, asymmetric envelope design with tactile stripes, glossy colours and gold details.<sup>9</sup> Inside each package, a hidden illustrated story creates an "unboxing" experience that adds value beyond the chocolate itself, communicating craftsmanship and origin authenticity through design.

### **Nordic flavours differentiate Swedish chocolate globally**

Flavour innovation reinforces premium positioning, with surveys showing 59 per cent of European consumers perceive chocolate with unique flavour inclusions as "more premium" in quality.<sup>10</sup> Swedish chocolate makers consistently validate this trend, with one bean-to-bar maker noting that "local flavours added are always a success". Swedish specialty brands such as Standout Chocolate manufacture unconventional pairings including wild lingonberries, sugar kelp, liquorice root, spruce shoots and porcini mushrooms with fine-origin cocoa.

### **Exclusive retail channels preserve artisanal positioning**

Distribution strategy reinforces luxury perception, with Stockholm's Ejles Choklad selling handmade pralines and truffles only in its own boutique, avoiding resellers to preserve heritage and quality control. The growth of independent chocolate boutiques and bean-to-bar workshops offers artisanal shopping experiences where consumers learn about cacao origin and craftsmanship, justifying higher price points.

### **Front-of-pack transparency appeals to premium buyers**

Following RX Bar's success with front-of-pack ingredient declarations, clean-label communication has become a premium strategy.<sup>11</sup> For example, Swedish brands such as Dig/Get Raw print simple ingredient lists directly on bar wrappers (for example, "walnuts, cashews, cocoa powder, date paste, coconut blossom syrup"). This shifts away from complicated back-label lists, allowing consumers to immediately understand what they are eating while reinforcing minimally processed, premium positioning.

However, Swedish buyers navigate a challenging balance: the market demands quality and credible sustainability signals, while remaining highly price sensitive. This means premium positioning must be carefully calibrated, as Swedish consumers expect certifications, origin stories and craftsmanship, but do not accept the price premiums seen in markets such as Switzerland or the UK.

### **Swedish consumers demand transparency on cocoa origins**

Swedish consumers demand transparency about where their cocoa comes from and who produces it. This trend is reinforced by European legislation such as the

<sup>9</sup> World Brand Design Society, [Pond Design Elevated Malmö Chocolate Factory's Brand](#)

<sup>10</sup> FMCG Gurus, [Consumer Insights](#)

<sup>11</sup> The Branding, [Insights](#)

Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, which requires companies to trace supply chains to origin.<sup>12</sup> Swedish cocoa companies actively share farmer stories and origin details on packaging and marketing materials.

Craft chocolate makers lead this trend by building narratives around specific cooperatives and regions. For example, Standout Chocolate sources fine-flavour cocoa beans from named cooperatives including the Maya Mountain Cacao cooperative. Similarly, Svenska Kakaobolaget highlights its long-term sourcing relationship with the Kokoa Kamili cooperative in Mbingu, Tanzania, a partnership maintained since 2016.

Mainstream brands also acknowledge this trend. Marabou (Mondelēz International) promotes its "Cocoa Life" sustainability programme in Swedish marketing campaigns, while major grocery chains such as ICA and Coop publish detailed cocoa sourcing standards on their websites.

### **Fairtrade certification becomes baseline market standard**

According to Fairtrade Sweden, 90 per cent of Swedes recognise the Fairtrade mark, and Swedish consumption generated SEK 67 million in Fairtrade premiums in 2024, which were paid back to producer organisations.<sup>13</sup>

Despite inflationary pressure, overall ethical spending has shown resilience, with sales of Fairtrade-labelled chocolate bars, cocoa and hot chocolate increasing by 30 per cent and 36 per cent respectively in 2022. This growth was driven primarily by super-markets such as Axfood Group converting their private labels to Fairtrade, effectively making Fairtrade certification a minimum standard for mainstream market access.

Parallel initiatives, such as retailers' own due diligence programmes and the upcoming EU Deforestation Regulation, are pushing Swedish buyers to source deforestation-free, traceable and socially responsible cocoa, typically via Fairtrade, organic, Rainforest Alliance or company programmes such as Cocoa Life.

Furthermore, Nordic coordination is strengthening, and in 2022, ETI Sweden reported on a joint webinar: "It's Time for a Nordic Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa". The session brought together companies and stakeholders to explore a Nordic sustainable cocoa platform, inspired by existing national cocoa initiatives in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. This signals potential for harmonised regional standards that could simplify, or raise, entry requirements for exporters across Nordic markets.

### **Organic certification commands premium positioning**

While Fairtrade addresses social equity, organic certification commands premium pricing and aligns with Sweden's environmental values. Sweden recorded organic retail sales of EUR 2.3 billion in 2023, a 70 per cent increase since 2014, with yearly per-capita spending reaching EUR 220 (one of the highest levels in Europe).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> European Commission, [Corporate sustainability due diligence](#)

<sup>13</sup> Fairtrade International, [Fairtrade remains the "go-to" ethical label](#)

<sup>14</sup> IFOAM, [Global Organic Continues to grow](#)

Organic accounts for 7.8 per cent of total food sales, positioning Sweden as the fourth-largest organic market in Europe and the largest in Scandinavia.<sup>15</sup> Growth is sustained by high purchasing power and strong consumer interest in health, traceability and environmental responsibility.

This creates clear demand pathways for organic cocoa. Swedish premium and bean-to-bar makers, such as Standout Chocolate and Malmö Chokladfabrik, source organic cocoa beans and derivatives. Organic cocoa powder, nibs and mass are widely distributed through health-food retailers, linking organics to wellness, premiumisation and clean-label trends in Sweden's cocoa sector.

### **“Beyond Fairtrade” and origin processing create competitive advantage**

Malmö Chokladfabrik was a pioneer in achieving both Fairtrade and organic certification in Sweden, establishing dual certification as a competitive differentiator in the premium segment. This “dual certification” approach signals to consumers both social equity (Fairtrade) and environmental integrity (organic), commanding higher price points and stronger brand loyalty.

Furthermore, the "beyond fair trade" movement extends this logic, emphasising value retention through processing at origin rather than exporting raw beans. For example, Wermlands Choklad sold parts of its company to cocoa farmers in Ecuador, where the roasted beans are now processed on site before the chocolate product is finished in Sweden. Nordic Chocolate imports directly traded cacao nibs, emphasising paying above-market price, while companies such as Tzocolate emphasise their partnership with Filipino brand Theo and Philo, where chocolate, nibs and cocoa powder are processed and packed in the Philippines, paying above-market prices to enable farmer investment in their own post-harvest and processing facilities.

### **Vegan, allergen-free and clean-label chocolate gains ground in Sweden**

Sweden's plant-based food market is projected to grow at 15 per cent annually, rising from SEK 490 million in 2025 to SEK 990 million by 2030.<sup>16</sup> Sweden is also one of Europe's strongest plant-based markets, with exceptionally high per-capita consumption of plant-based milk, meat and cheese substitutes.

These developments directly impact the chocolate sector, as consumers increasingly seek vegan alternatives across all confectionery categories. Swedish manufacturers and importers are responding by expanding vegan chocolate offerings, from classic bars to pralines, truffles and spreads, positioning plant-based chocolate not only as a dietary alternative but as a premium, flavour-forward segment within confectionery, snacking and gifting markets.

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<sup>15</sup> IFOAM, [Organic in Europe](#)

<sup>16</sup> Knowledge Sourcing Intelligence, [Sweden plant-based food market size, share opportunities and trends](#)

## Meeting the requirements

### Mandatory requirements for cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives in Sweden

#### Safety of cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives

When exporting cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives to Sweden, you must comply with the legally binding requirements regarding food safety, as specified in the European Union's General Food Law.<sup>17</sup> This law mainly relates to traceability, hygiene and control.

#### Official border control for cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives imported to Sweden/the European Union

Official food controls include regular inspections, which can be carried out at import or at any further stage of marketing. In case of non-compliance with European food legislation, individual cases are reported through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feeds (RASFF), which is freely and publicly accessible.<sup>18</sup>

You should be aware that repeated non-compliance with European food legislation might lead to special import conditions or even suspension of imports from that country. Stricter conditions include laboratory tests for a certain percentage of shipments from specified countries.

#### Contaminant control in food products

The European Regulation on Contaminants sets maximum levels for certain contaminants in food products.<sup>19</sup> This regulation is frequently updated, and apart from the limits set for general foodstuffs, there are several specific contaminant limits for specific products, including cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives.

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<sup>17</sup> European Commission, [General Food law](#)

<sup>18</sup> European Commission, [Rapid Alert System for food and feed](#)

<sup>19</sup> Official Journal of the European Union, [Regulation 2021/1165](#)

**Table 3. EU requirements on contaminants for cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives**

Requirement	Details
<b>Pesticide residues</b>	Refer to the <a href="#">EU pesticide database</a> . You will find the <a href="#">highest levels of pesticide residues allowed</a> . It includes limits for pesticide residues on cocoa beans, which helps prevent contamination in cocoa derivatives
<b>Microbiological contamination</b>	No specific rules for cocoa products, but very important that cocoa products do not contain harmful microbes such as E. coli, salmonella, other Enterobacteriaceae, moulds or yeast.
<b>Mycotoxins</b>	<a href="#">Ochratoxin A</a> is of special relevance for cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives. No specific limits are set by the EU for cocoa beans, but a shipment will be rejected if any incidence of mould infestation is detected. For cocoa powder specifically, there are limits set by Regulation (EU) 2023/915: 3.0 µg/kg.
<b>Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons</b>	Applicable to cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benzo(a)pyrene: 5.0 µg/kg of fat</li> <li>• Sum of benzo(a)pyrene, benzo(a)anthracene, benzo(b)fluoranthene and chrysene: 30.0 µg/kg of fat</li> </ul>
<b>Free fatty acids (FFA)</b>	The FFA content in cocoa beans is expected to be below 1.0% in order to achieve the acceptable level of 1.75% in the cocoa butter extracted from the dried cocoa beans, which is the legal maximum limit for cocoa butter
<b>Cadmium contamination</b>	The EU has rules on cadmium in cocoa derivatives and finished products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk chocolate (&lt; 30% total dry cocoa solids): 0.10 ppm</li> <li>• Chocolate (&lt; 50% total dry cocoa solids; milk chocolate (≥ 30% total dry cocoa solids): 0.30 ppm</li> <li>• Chocolate (≥ 50% total dry cocoa solids): 0.80 ppm</li> <li>• Cocoa powder sold to the final consumer or as an ingredient in sweetened cocoa powder: 0.60 ppm</li> </ul> Buyers also monitor cadmium levels in cocoa beans. Normally a maximum level of 0.8 ppm is tolerated, but some buyers require cadmium levels below 0.5 ppm.
<b>Nickel contamination</b>	The EU has rules on nickel in cocoa derivatives and finished products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk chocolate (&lt; 30% total dry cocoa solids): 2.5 ppm</li> <li>• Milk chocolate (≥ 30% dry cocoa solids) 7 ppm</li> <li>• Cocoa powder and fat-reduced cocoa powder: 15 ppm</li> </ul>
<b>Extraction solvents</b>	This regulation only applies to certain cocoa butter, with a limit on hexane use: 1 ppm.
<b>Regulation on deforestation-free products (EUDR)</b>	Cocoa producers and exporters are required to ensure traceability to plot level, linking each cocoa lot to geolocation data and demonstrating that production did not take place on land subject to deforestation after the EUDR cut-off date of 31 December 2020, once the regulation took effect.

## Regulation on deforestation-free products (EUDR)

While the regulation's application dates have already been postponed and may change again, its core obligations are clear and unlikely to be altered. Cocoa exporters should therefore focus on preparing for these practical requirements.<sup>20</sup>

Under the EUDR, cocoa and cocoa products must be demonstrated to be:

1. Deforestation-free: cocoa must not originate from land that was deforested or degraded after the cut-off date of 31 December 2020;
2. Fully traceable to plot level: each cocoa lot must be linked to precise geolocation data (coordinates or polygons) of the production plots;
3. Legally produced: production must comply with relevant local laws in the country of origin, including land use, environmental, labour and tax regulations;
4. Covered by due diligence: exporters and operators must collect, assess and retain information proving compliance and be able to provide this evidence to EU buyers and authorities.

In practice, this means exporters must have robust traceability systems, reliable geolocation data for all supplying farms and internal procedures to manage and document EUDR compliance per shipment.

At the time of writing, the expected application dates are:

- 30 December 2026 for large and medium-sized operators and traders;
- 30 June 2027 for micro and small enterprises.

These dates reflect agreed delays at EU level to allow additional preparation time. However, further adjustments remain possible, and exporters are strongly advised not to wait for final confirmation before taking action.

As the EUDR implementation timeline and guidance continue to evolve, exporters and buyers are strongly advised to consult official sources for the most up-to-date information. The European Commission publishes the regulation text, implementing acts, guidance documents and FAQs related to EUDR compliance. In Sweden, the Swedish Forest Agency (Skogsstyrelsen) acts as the designated competent authority and provides national guidance on implementation, controls and enforcement for operators placing products on the Swedish market.

### Labelling requirements

Product labels must be clear, legible and easily understood by the buyer. In practice, labels must be in English and include the following information to enable batch-level traceability:

Cocoa beans:

- Product name
- Grade
- Lot or batch code
- Country of origin
- Net weight in kilograms
- For organic and/or Fairtrade (and other certifications): name/code of the inspection body and certification number.

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<sup>20</sup> European Commission, [Regulation on Deforestation-free Products](#)

Cocoa derivatives:

- Product name according to the Codex Alimentarius definitions;
- Lot or batch code;
- Country of origin;
- Net weight in kilograms;
- Name and address of manufacturer, packer, distributor and/or importer;
- List of ingredients;
- Date of processing and packaging;
- Instructions for storage and use;
- For organic and/or Fairtrade: name/code of the inspection body and certification number.

### **Packaging requirements**

Cocoa beans are traditionally shipped in jute bags, which can weigh between 60 and 65 kilograms. On the mainstream market, bulk shipment of cocoa beans has become more popular. This means cocoa beans are loaded directly into the ship's cargo hold or in shipping containers containing a flexi-bag (see Figure 2). This mega bulk method is often adopted by larger cocoa processors, which handle cocoa beans of standard qualities. In the specialty cocoa segment, jute bags are still commonly used. For very high-quality micro-lots, vacuum-sealed GrainPro packaging is often used.

Cocoa derivatives have different packaging and transportation needs. There are different options for transportation, but buyers may have their own specific requirements and instructions.

- Cocoa paste and butter are usually packed in solid form in 25-kg blocks, wrapped and placed in cartons. These cartons are then palletised or loaded directly into shipping containers for transportation. In warm conditions, cocoa butter may soften or melt due to high temperatures; as a result, some importers opt for temperature-controlled containers to maintain product integrity during transit.<sup>21</sup>
- The paste and butter can also be transported in their liquid (molten) form, using heated stainless-steel tanks to maintain the required temperature during transit.
- Cocoa powder is usually packed in 25-kg multi-layer kraft paper bags. It can be transported without many strict rules, but does need to be stored in a dry and clean environment and protected from moisture and odour contamination.<sup>22</sup>
- Couverture chocolate is available in a range of packaging formats. These include aluminium foil, composite films, paper or plastic trays, and are transported in carton boxes. Packaging formats and unit sizes vary depending on the end user and application. Chocolatiers often prefer chips/drops in bags of 1, 2.5, 5 or 10 kg, as these formats are practical for handling and dosing. Other industries may require chocolate in alternative forms, such as liquids or chunks, in pack sizes up to 25 kg.

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<sup>21</sup> Cargo Handbook, [Cocoa Butter](#)

<sup>22</sup> Cargo Handbook, [Cocoa Powder](#)

## Additional requirements and certifications for cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives

### Quality requirements

In Sweden, and generally in Europe, buyers use various methods to check the quality and flavour of cocoa beans. They might use more than one method simultaneously.

A key industry reference is the Federation of Cocoa Commerce (FCC), which sets widely used contractual quality standards for cocoa beans traded on the international market. FCC rules define minimum quality requirements, including parameters such as moisture content, mould, slaty beans, insect damage, foreign matter and defect tolerances. These standards are commonly referenced in cocoa trade contracts and are highly relevant for exporters supplying the European market.

In addition, the Cacao of Excellence Programme created the International Standards for the Assessment of Cocoa Quality and Flavour.<sup>23</sup> These standards and protocols, covering cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives, are publicly available through the programme's website

Another industry reference is the Chocolate and Cocoa Industry Quality Requirements, which provide practical guidance on evaluating cocoa bean quality for industrial use.<sup>24</sup>

For cocoa derivatives, product quality is determined not only by the quality of the beans used, but also by processing, handling and storage conditions. Exporters seeking access to the European market for semi-finished cocoa products are therefore expected to comply with recognised international quality standards covering both raw materials and processing practices.

Some other international standards available are:

- ISO's Standards on classification and sampling for cocoa beans;<sup>25</sup>
- The quality assessment and tasting guide by USAID, Equal Exchange and TCHO. This helps assess the quality of cocoa along the value chain.<sup>26</sup>

The United Nations' Codex Alimentarius has standards for cocoa products. They provide helpful guidance on how to handle and store semi-finished cocoa products and chocolate. European buyers reference these factors when evaluating your product. You can find these standards in the following documents:

- Standard for Cocoa Powders (Cocoas) and Dry Mixtures of Cocoa and Sugars;<sup>27</sup>
- Standard for Cocoa (Cacao) Mass (Cocoa/Chocolate Liquor) and Cocoa Cake;<sup>28</sup>
- Standard for Cocoa Butter.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cocoa of Excellence, [Home](#)

<sup>24</sup> Cocoa Quality, [Cocoa beans](#)

<sup>25</sup> ISO, [Cocoa](#)

<sup>26</sup> Equal Exchange, [Cocoa Sensory Analysis Tasting Form](#)

<sup>27</sup> FAO, [Standard for Cocoa Powder](#)

<sup>28</sup> FAO, [Standard for Cocoa mass](#)

<sup>29</sup> FAO, [Standard for Cocoa Butter](#)

## Food safety and quality management

To ensure cocoa derivatives are safe, producers are expected to implement HACCP rules.<sup>30</sup> Some buyers might require extra certificates for quality management and food safety. This is especially common among importers of ingredients for food and health, and those engaged in private label manufacturing.

Examples of such advanced food safety management systems are Food Safety System Certification (FSSC 22000)<sup>31</sup>, BRCGS Food Safety<sup>32</sup>, International Featured Standards (IFS Food)<sup>33</sup> and the Safe Quality Food programme (SQF)<sup>34</sup>. These standards are all part of the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).<sup>35</sup>

## Certification of organic production

To market and trade cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives as organic within the European Union, producers and exporters must comply with Regulation (EU) 2018/848 on organic production and labelling of organic products, which replaced Regulation (EC) No 834/2007. The regulation entered into force in January 2022 and sets uniform rules for organic production, control and labelling across the EU and includes the following:

- Organic operators in third countries must be certified by a control body recognised by the European Commission under EU Regulation (EU) 2021/2307. Organic certification must cover all stages of the supply chain, from primary production to processing, storage and export.
- Each organic consignment imported into the EU must be accompanied by an electronic Certificate of Inspection (COI) issued through the TRACES NT system (Trade Control and Expert System New Technology).

In addition to the EU organic logo (the green leaf symbol), Sweden has its own national certification system known as KRAV. While the KRAV label is based on EU organic rules, it applies stricter environmental and ethical criteria, extending beyond EU requirements to areas such as animal welfare, social responsibility, energy use, climate impact, aquaculture and sustainable practices in restaurants. As a result, many Swedish retailers and food manufacturers prefer the KRAV label due to its strong consumer recognition and value for brand differentiation.

## Environmental and social sustainability certifications

Other important environmental and social standards covering the Swedish/European market are:

- **Rainforest Alliance:** sustainability certification and assurance programme that promotes environmentally responsible farming, better livelihoods for producers, and transparent, traceable supply chains.

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<sup>30</sup> FAO, [HACCP rules](#)

<sup>31</sup> FSSC, [FSSC 22 000](#)

<sup>32</sup> BRCGS, [Food Safety](#)

<sup>33</sup> IFS, [Home](#)

<sup>34</sup> SQF Institute, [Home](#)

<sup>35</sup> GFSI, [Home](#)

- **Fairtrade International** standards which require producers and traders to meet a range of economic, environmental and social criteria. It includes a minimum price and a Fairtrade premium.
- **Fair for Life** standard, which concerns certification programmes for fair trade, responsible supply chains and Corporate Social Responsibility.
- **Simbolo de Pequeños Productores/Small Producers' Symbol:** SPP is a fair-trade label created in 2006, recognised by relevant bodies and run by small producers.

#### **Useful Swedish information sources**

[Livsmedelsverket](#): food safety, additives and labelling.

[Jordbruksverket](#): import of plant products, organic certification.

[Tullverket](#): customs and tariffs.

[Konsumentverket](#): consumer protection and marketing claims.

[Organic Sweden/KRAV/Fairtrade Sverige](#): certification and organic trade.

[Business Sweden/Verksam.se](#): trade and business portals.

[Svensk Dagligvaruhandel/Livsmedelsföretagen](#): retail and buyer associations.

[Swedish Forest Agency \(Skogsstyrelsen\)](#): national authority responsible for forest policy, forest monitoring and land-use data in Sweden, and the designated competent authority for the implementation and enforcement of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).

## Determine your logistics solution

### Logistics and delivery terms

Efficient logistics planning is essential when supplying cocoa and cocoa products to the Swedish market, where buyers expect reliability, full documentation compliance and predictable lead times. Sweden's import flows are dominated by well-organised, sustainability-oriented logistics chains, with the ports of Gothenburg, Stockholm Norvik and Malmö/Copenhagen (Öresund region) serving as the main entry points.

Imports of cocoa and semi-finished cocoa products into Sweden are predominantly routed through European re-export hubs rather than shipped directly from origin countries. Cocoa beans entering Sweden are largely re-exported from EU neighbours (primarily Denmark and the Netherlands), which together supplied nearly half of Sweden's bean imports in 2024. For value-added products such as cocoa paste, cocoa butter, cocoa powder and chocolate, the trend is even more pronounced: Sweden sources the majority of its imports from Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain and Norway, reflecting Europe's strong concentration of cocoa grinding and processing capacity. This pattern indicates that Swedish buyers typically rely on established intra-EU logistics flows and European processors, with only limited direct imports from producing countries.

### Customs clearance

All cocoa and cocoa preparations imported into Sweden must undergo EU customs clearance, which can take place:

1. Directly in Sweden (Gothenburg, Stockholm Norvik, Malmö);
2. Indirectly via an EU hub (e.g., Amsterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg), then moved as free-circulation goods to Sweden.

When goods are customs-cleared in another EU Member State, they are released as free-circulation goods, meaning all duties and import formalities have been completed, allowing them to move freely within the EU without further customs procedures. For this reason, many Swedish importers prefer to clear cocoa in the Netherlands or Belgium, where specialised cocoa inspection, handling and certification systems are established, and then transport the goods to Sweden via short-sea shipping or truck.

### Required documentation for Swedish importers

Exporters must provide complete and accurate documentation, typically including:

- Commercial invoice and packing list
- Bill of lading/AWB
- Certificate of origin (preferably with detailed traceability)
- HS code declaration (correct classification is crucial)
- Organic certificates and TRACES / COI entries (if applicable)
- Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance or other certification documents (if applicable)

- Allergen and contaminant declarations (important for couvertures, chocolate bars and semi-finished products)
- Microbiological analysis and heavy-metal testing
- Shelf-life and storage requirements for chocolate products
- Batch-level traceability documentation

### **Delivery terms**

When working with Swedish buyers, delivery terms (Incoterms) should be agreed with full clarity, as they directly influence cost, risk and logistics responsibilities. FOB is used when goods are shipped via major European hubs such as Rotterdam or Antwerp, enabling Swedish importers or freight forwarders to take control from the loading port onward. For direct shipments to Sweden, however, buyers frequently prefer CFR/CIF or even DAP/DDP, as these terms offer greater predictability in total landed costs and transit times – an important factor for smaller, high-value consignments such as fine-flavour cocoa beans, cocoa paste and other premium cocoa products.

Selecting the right Incoterm helps avoid misunderstandings about who pays for freight and insurance, who arranges transport, and when ownership and risk transfer from exporter to buyer. Find more information on Incoterms on ITC's Market Access Map.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> ITC, [Incoterms in market access map](#)

## Find a business partner

### How to find buyers on the Swedish cocoa market

#### Sector associations

Sector associations play a central role in helping exporters map the market structure, understand buyer networks and identify potential partners in Sweden and Europe's cocoa and chocolate industry. They provide insight into market trends, regulatory developments sustainability initiatives and maintain directories of member companies that include importers, processors and distributors active in the cocoa and chocolate sector, as well as related sectors that demand cocoa and cocoa products.

At the European level, CAOBISCO represents the chocolate, biscuit and confectionery industry,<sup>37</sup> and the European Cocoa Association represents the cocoa industry specifically,<sup>38</sup> including importers, cocoa-processing companies and others. Both associations have a members' page, but with little presence from Swedish companies.

Sweden does not have any cocoa or chocolate-specific associations. However, the Livsmedelsföretagen (Li), or Food Federation of Sweden, represents over 800 food and beverage companies, including manufacturers using cocoa and cocoa derivatives in their products.<sup>39</sup>

For exporters focusing on the organic market, Organic Sweden serves as a national platform promoting organic production and trade.<sup>40</sup> The organisation brings together companies across the organic value chain, including importers and chocolate brands marketing KRAV- and EU Organic-certified products.<sup>41</sup>

#### Sector-specific trade fairs

The main cocoa and chocolate trade fairs relevant to Swedish buyers and importers are not held in Sweden itself but across major European trade hubs such as Germany, the Netherlands and France. These international events regularly attract Swedish importers, chocolate manufacturers and chocolate makers, as well as other food manufacturers who attend to discover new suppliers, explore sourcing trends and establish business connections.

Participating in these trade fairs allows exporters from cocoa-producing countries to meet Swedish buyers directly and gain visibility in the wider European food market. At the European level, key events include:

- **ISM (Germany):** a trade show specialised in the confectionery sector, including chocolate and other end-using industries of cocoa and derivatives.

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<sup>37</sup> Caobisco, [Home](#)

<sup>38</sup> Eurococoa, [Home](#)

<sup>39</sup> Livsmedelsföretagen, [Home](#)

<sup>40</sup> Organic Sweden, [Home](#)

<sup>41</sup> Organic Sweden, [Members](#)

- **Chocoo/Amsterdam Cocoa Week (the Netherlands):** an event for the global cocoa and chocolate industry that combines a professional trade fair with a consumer festival.
- **Salon du Chocolat (France):** important international event dedicated to chocolate and cocoa.
- **Eurochocolate (Italy):** one of Europe's largest and most iconic chocolate festivals, bringing together consumers, artisans and industry professionals.
- **Anuga (Cologne, Germany) and SIAL (Paris, France):** two of the world's largest trade fairs for food and beverages, including chocolate.
- **Biofach (Nuremberg, Germany):** the world's largest trade fair for organic products and the most important platform for organic-certified cocoa and cocoa-related products.
- **Natural & Organic Food Show (London, UK) and Natexpo (France):** trade fairs dedicated to natural and organic products and sustainable sourcing.

Although these large-scale fairs are held outside Sweden, the country hosts several regional and sector-specific trade shows that are valuable for connecting with the local market:

- **Chokladkonfektyrfestivalen:** new festival in Stockholm focusing on high-quality chocolate from Sweden.
- **Nordic Organic Expo:** Scandinavia's largest event for natural and organic products, attracting both regional and international exhibitors.
- **Bite Stockholm:** key event for the food, hospitality and catering sectors, showcasing innovations / ingredients used in professional kitchens.
- **Stockholm Food & Wine:** a major consumer-facing event that also offers visibility opportunities for premium food and beverage brands

Exporters of cocoa and cocoa derivatives are strongly advised to attend and participate in these trade fairs, as they offer multiple advantages: direct exposure to Swedish and Nordic buyers, opportunities for networking and partnership building and firsthand insights into existing buyers, sustainability and other sourcing requirements, innovations, etc. Participating in both Swedish and European trade events can significantly increase an exporter's chances of entering and positioning effectively in the Swedish market.

## Conclusions

The Swedish market for cocoa beans and cocoa derivatives offers a diverse but demanding landscape for exporters from low- and middle-income countries. Sweden is a relatively small importer within the EU, with most cocoa entering the country indirectly through large European hubs such as the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. Direct imports from producing countries exist, especially for high-quality cocoa beans and small volumes of cocoa paste, but remain limited and are primarily linked to the specialty, organic and bean-to-bar markets.

The market structure is dominated by European cocoa processors and specialised importers, as Sweden has limited domestic grinding or bean-importing capacity. For cocoa beans, most Swedish craft chocolate makers source from specialty importers located elsewhere in Europe. Exporters with small volumes will therefore find more accessible opportunities through European intermediaries and a few Swedish chocolate makers, while exporters with larger volumes of consistent quality may build long-term relationships with EU-based grinders or ingredient importers supplying Sweden.

Sustainability expectations in Sweden are among the highest in Europe. Buyers and consumers increasingly demand certified, traceable and due-diligence-compliant cocoa, alongside full compliance with EU food-safety legislation. This includes strict limits on pesticide residues and contaminants such as cadmium, as well as preparedness for emerging regulatory frameworks such as the EUDR. Suppliers that can demonstrate robust traceability systems, transparent documentation and credible certification (particularly organic) are best positioned to meet Swedish buyer expectations.

Opportunities for exporters exist across several product groups. High-quality cocoa beans and fine-flavour cacao can access the growing specialty chocolate market. Semi-finished cocoa products such as paste and powder offer potential, especially for suppliers with the capacity to meet strict quality standards and provide stable volumes. Niche opportunities are also emerging for upcycled cocoa products (for example, cocoa shells and husks), reflecting Sweden's strong interest in circular economy concepts and functional beverages.

To succeed in the Swedish market, exporters should:

- Ensure robust compliance with EU food-safety and sustainability regulations.
- Invest in quality consistency, traceability systems and transparent documentation.
- Build long-term relationships with Swedish buyers directly or through European importers or processors, depending on their product and scale.
- Highlight origin, flavour profiles, fermentation protocols, social impact and environmental practices, which are increasingly valued by Swedish buyers.
- Consider the strategic development of value-added cocoa derivatives, where demand is rising but competition remains highly consolidated.