Buyer Channel Map — Sweden

Who actually buys food in Sweden, channel by channel — and what each buyer type wants before a first meeting. A structural map for Central-European food producers, not a contact list.

The 60-second read

Three buying organisations run the trade. ICA, Axfood (Willys, Hemköp) and Coop together account for roughly 90% of Swedish grocery, with Lidl growing in discount. Decisions are central, professional and data-driven — and buyers work in English as a matter of course.

Sustainability decides listings, not just image. Documented climate footprint, packaging recyclability and certification (KRAV for organic, on top of EU organic) actively decide who gets on the shelf. Nordic buyers ask early.

Sweden is a gateway, not a total. Private label is strong and centrally sourced, and a Swedish listing is the reference that opens Norway and Denmark — the Nordics behave as one commercial region with national buying desks.

The channel map

Buyer type	Who they are	What they want first	Realistic role for a CE producer
Central category desks	The buying desks at ICA, Axfood and Coop that decide most of the shelf	IFS/BRCGS, Swedish labelling, documented sustainability	Brand listing or own-brand supply
Discount	Lidl Sverige; Axfood's Willys	Sharp price, dependable volume, private-label capability	Private-label supply
Distributors	Frozen and food-industry distributors placing imported ranges	Certification, category fit, reliable cold-chain delivery	Brand placement into retail + foodservice
Foodservice wholesalers	Martin & Servera, Menigo — supplying restaurants and public-sector kitchens across the Nordics	Catering formats, documented quality + sustainability for tenders	Foodservice supply
Private-label sourcing	Central own-brand desks buying internationally	Higher-tier certification, capacity, national-scale volume	Own-brand manufacture
Organic own-brand programmes	Coop Änglamark, ICA I love eco, Axfood Garant Eko	EU organic + KRAV opens the strongest channels, traceability	Certified organic supply
Public-sector kitchens	Municipal/regional kitchens with mandated organic ratios, via wholesalers	Certified volume, tender documentation	Certified supply (no consumer brand needed)

Named retail groups (public knowledge)

ICA — biggest group; independent ICA merchants + central buying.

Axfood — Willys (discount) and Hemköp (supermarkets) + Dagab wholesale.

Coop — consumer cooperative; strong sustainability profile; Änglamark organic brand.

Lidl Sverige — hard discount, growing share.

Martin & Servera / Menigo — foodservice wholesalers; the HoReCa and public-kitchen route.

Trade calendar hooks

Sweden-specific fairs are limited; organic producers use the **Nordic Organic Food Fair** (Malmö) and **BioFach** (Nuremberg). Honest line: Nordic buyers attend the big shows with packed calendars, but the buyer set is small and professional enough to reach directly, in English, year-round.

Three mistakes CE producers make in Sweden

Treating Sweden as the whole Nordic prize. On its own it's mid-sized; as the entry that references into Norway and Denmark, it's outsized. Price and plan for the region.

Leaving sustainability documentation half-finished. Nordic buyers respect honest, in-progress answers over glossy claims — but they *will* ask about climate footprint and packaging. Walk in prepared.

Overlooking the public-sector and pick-and-mix channels. Municipal kitchens buy certified volume without a consumer brand; and for confectionery, the Saturday lösgodis (pick-and-mix) trade is a bulk route foreign producers routinely miss.

This map shows *where* the buyers sit. ProspectX gets you in front of the named ones — in English, with the certification and sustainability answers Nordic desks ask for first. → Book a Discovery Call.

Sources

(Only facts not already published on getprospectx.com/export are sourced here.)

ICA, Axfood and Coop together ~90% of Swedish grocery: The Nordic Times, "Swedish food retail in few hands — ICA and Axfood dominate" — https://nordictimes.com/economy/swedish-food-retail-in-few-hands-ica-and-axfood-dominate/ ; Axfood, "The Swedish food retail market" — https://www.axfood.com/about-axfood/market-and-trends/food-retail-in-sweden/