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#ISM #ISMFamily #sweetweekcologne

ISM 2026 sets the international standard for what is snacked, purchased and traded worldwide

Strong international presence +++ Expanded trade fair alliance reinforces the value chain +++ Record number of country pavilions +++ ISM Ingredients staged as an independent trade fair format for raw materials and ingredients for the first time +++ Networking and event formats ensure an interactive trade fair experience

From 1 to 4 February 2026, ISM in Cologne confirmed its position as the leading global trade fair for sweets and snacks. With around 1,600 exhibiting companies from 72 countries and a foreign share of 87 percent, the trade fair presented itself at a consistently high international level. Parallel to this, the debut edition of ISM Ingredients as an independent trade fair format set a strong signal and boasting 87 exhibiting companies almost trebled the number of exhibitors compared to the former ingredients segment of ProSweets Cologne. Around 32,500 trade visitors in total from 140 countries used the trade fair duo to initiate business, place orders and establish new partnerships along the entire value chain. The high level of participation from international decision-makers from the trade, industry and supplier sector underscored the importance of the trade fair as a central business platform in a dynamic market environment. The business focus was enhanced by diverse networking and event formats that promoted the personal exchange.

"In times of volatile markets, the industry needs platforms that provide guidance and enable business deals. ISM 2026 provided precisely that: with clear market relevance, even stronger international participation and a trade fair concept that brings the entire value chain together while at the same time paving the way for the future consolidation of all sections under the ISM umbrella brand. As such, we are consistently pursuing the long-term innovation process of our trade fair formats," emphasised Gerald Böse, President and Chief Executive Officer of Koelnmesse GmbH.

Powerful prelude: Dialogue, politics and new networking format

ISM 2026 kicked off with a star-studded panel comprising of leading representatives from the worlds of politics and business on the topic of "International trade policies and diversification". The opening discussion at ISM in Cologne made it clear that the strength of the international sweets industry is interlinked with cross-industry collaboration and reliable trade policies.

"As the leading international trade fair, ISM offers precisely the right platform, where the industry, politicians and partners can come together to jointly secure the



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competitiveness and innovative strength of the sweets industry long-term. This was explicitly accentuated once more during the panel discussion," stated Bastian Fassin, Chairman of the International Sweets & Biscuits Fair Task Force (AISM).

The dialogue continued in the evening at the ISM Opening Night held at the Confex, which was organised for the first time this year. Around 600 guests from the sweets and snacks sector came together in a relaxed atmosphere to network and engage in a personal exchange away from the hustle and bustle of the trade fair.

The trade fair concept of ISM 2026 itself also focused on networking and continuity: Together with ProSweets Cologne and the newly established ISM Ingredients, an integrated format arose that covered the entire value chain of the sweets and snacks industry. The close spatial and thematic interlinking of the three events in Hall 10.1 was used intensively by the exhibitors and visitors and was evaluated as being clearly beneficial for efficient discussions and sustainable business developments. At the same time, this connection forms the basis for the further development of the trade fair portfolio: As of 2027, ProSweets Cologne will become part of the joint umbrella brand ISM, under the new name ISM Manufacturing.

High level international participation

ISM 2026 recorded a strong international presence among the exhibitors. With 39 pavilions from 29 countries and regions, the number of country stands reached a new record high. The exhibitor portfolio of ISM 2026 reflected the diversity and high performance of the sweets and snacks industry - from established brand manufacturers and internationally operating groups to specialised niche suppliers.

In terms of visitors, ISM was once again the central meeting point for the international trade. The trading companies represented included, among others, Aeon, Aldi, Auchan, Carrefour, Colruyt Group, Coop, Edeka, Globus, Mercadona, Metro, Migros, Rewe Group, S Group, Salling Group, Schwarz Group, Tesco and Walmart. Drugstore chains such as Alnatura, A.S. Watson, Budni, dm-drogerie markt, Müller and Rossmann were also represented.

With a share of 71 percent, there was a strong international participation among the trade visitors. The most strongly represented countries included Belgium, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. Outside Europe, China, Israel, Japan, Canada and the USA were among the top nations.

Lab5 by ISM becomes an experiential area

In the scope of Lab5 by ISM in Hall 10.1, the trade fair once again placed the spotlight on innovations, new product concepts and young companies. Over 30 start-ups and scale-ups from 16 countries presented their products and services here. The newly-created theme section "ISM Functional Sweets" addressed the growing market for functional sweets. Furthermore, comprising over 150 new products, the New Product Showcase offered a concise overview of the current industry developments.

ISM Ingredients set a further highlight, also in Hall 10.1, with the "Special Show Ingredients - Functional and Climate-Conscious". The show focused on new recipes, modern processing technologies and product ideas from all over the globe.

#ISMfamily: International networking and strong social media performance

The brand's global presence is also evident on social media: Under the hashtag #ISMfamily the community networks beyond country borders. ISM 2026 achieved a total reach of more than 1.8 million across all channels - reaching many new target groups beyond the existing followers.

In particular, the creator programme on Sunday - with tastings, a tour and workshop on the sweets & snacks of the future - further established ISM as a key content platform. Industry giants like @crispyrob, @heymoritz, @rosakochtgruen, @Joeskochwelt, and @fabiundphil attended ISM to create content on-site and share the latest trends with their community. A special highlight: ISM mascot and walking act GISMO, who delighted both the audience and creators alike.

Awards recognise innovation and services to the industry

Awards presented at ISM were further highlights. Dr. Uwe Lebens, owner and long-standing Chief Operating Officer of Genuport Trade GmbH, received the renowned ISM Award 2026 for his outstanding services to the sweets and snacks industry.

CandyGlam won the New Product Showcase Award with its product "CREATINE Gummy Bar with chocolate (70%)" ahead of Chocolaterie Carré (Chocolate Espresso Martini Pearls) and Gottfried Wicklein ("Cinnamon Roll" biscuit bar). The ISM Consumer Award went to Hosta for its "nippon MINIS Original & Limited Edition Matcha". At the premiere of the new ISM Start-up Pitches Award, FRENVI was recognised for its concept for edible cutlery and cups.

The trade fair trio in figures

1,790 exhibiting companies from 75 countries participated in ISM, ISM Ingredients and ProSweets Cologne 2026. Foreign exhibitors accounted for 85 percent of the total. In total, around 32,500 trade visitors from 140 countries attended the trade fairs, the foreign share was 71 percent.

ISM is organised by Koelnmesse and the International Sweets and Biscuits Fair Task Force (AISM) is the industry sponsor of the event.

The next ISM is scheduled to take place from 31 January to 3 February 2027.

Koelnmesse - worldwide trade fairs for the food industry and food production:
Koelnmesse is an international leader in organizing global trade fairs for the food and beverage industry as well as for food production. With events such as Anuga, Anuga FoodTec, ISM, and ProSweets Cologne, Koelnmesse covers a wide spectrum - from ingredients to production, packaging, finished products, and the latest technologies and innovations. These globally renowned trade fairs, held in Cologne, Germany, set benchmarks in their respective sectors. In addition, Koelnmesse organizes numerous industry-specific trade fairs in key markets worldwide, including Brazil, China, India, Italy, Japan, Colombia, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates. Through these global activities, Koelnmesse offers its clients tailored events and leading regional trade fairs across various markets, providing a foundation for sustainable international business. Koelnmesse is thus ideally positioned to drive innovation and development in both the food industry and food production.

Further information: <https://www.ism-cologne.com/fair/industry-trade-fairs/>

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The next events:

THAIFEX - HOREC Asia - Southeast Asia's leading Hospitality & Food Service Trade Show, Bangkok 11.03. - 13.03.2026
Anuga Select Brazil - The Energy of Brazil, the Power of the Global Market, São Paulo 07.04. - 09.04.2026
Anuga Select Japan - WHERE TRADE AND TRENDS ARISE, Tokyo 15.04. - 17.04.2026

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