

ARAGON

A new European tech hub

Home to the European Digital Innovation Hub, Aragon is attracting huge investment from cloud providers like Microsoft and Amazon Web Services

In 2019, the government of Aragon announced that it would invest \$13 million to develop ‘Industry 4.0’. The hope was that the autonomous region in Spain could become a trailblazer for digitalization as it explored areas such as blockchain technology, artificial intelligence and a host of other emerging technologies.

In the five years since this financial program was introduced, Aragon has exceeded all expectations and has emerged as a leading European technological hub. It has been a remarkable journey that has seen some of the world’s leading tech companies choose to invest billions in the region.

Earlier this year, two of the largest data center operators announced \$24.8 billion worth of investment into Aragon, paving the way for the region to become the leading data center hub in Europe. The initial investment came in May when Amazon Web Services (AWS), a subsidiary of Amazon that provides on-demand cloud computing platforms and APIs to individuals, companies and governments, announced plans to spend \$17.5 billion over a decade to expand its Spanish cloud region.

JORGE AZCÓN
PRESIDENT, ARAGON GOVERNMENT

“The investment (from AWS) will definitively place Aragon on the map as a center of innovation and the cloud economy in Europe.”

The move will bring an estimated 6,800 jobs to Aragon, with roles in industries including construction, facilities maintenance, engineering and telecommunications. This further demonstrated the long-term commitment of AWS to the region.

“Beyond direct investments and jobs supported, we plan to continue our partnerships with local schools and community initiatives to support talent development, community education programs, and sustainability initiatives,” Suzana Curic, AWS Country Manager, Spain and Portugal, stated at the time of the announcement.

“We will match the electricity used in our data centers in Aragon with 100% renewable sources, and continue to look for different ways to innovate and run our operations more efficiently and sustainably, giving resources back to the communities where we have a presence.”

Jorge Azcón, President of Aragon, also spoke about the importance of the investment, stating: “Since its arrival in Aragon, AWS has turned the region’s potential for attracting technological investments into a reality. AWS is a global company, but its involvement in the local ecosystem and the communities in which it operates have made it an ‘Aragonese’ company. The investment we are announcing is unique in the history of technology investments in our community and in Spain. It will definitively place Aragon on the map as a center of innovation and the cloud economy in Europe.”

Just six weeks after AWS committed to Aragon, it was revealed that Microsoft was set to invest \$7.16 billion in its data center campus which is being built just outside the region’s



The Cathedral-Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar in Zaragoza

capital of Zaragoza. Set to span across 197 acres, the data center will provide cutting-edge, sustainable and secure AI solutions for the whole of Europe.

In addition to the investments, the government of Aragon has also launched numerous policies to encourage the attraction of technology companies. There are plans to create a new technology park next to the University of Zaragoza that will cover 98 acres and will promote the growth of companies in the ICT sector. The University itself is also expanding the number of places available for those looking to study computer engineering and mathematics.

“Two of the five largest American technological titans chose Aragon for a reason. It’s not a coincidence. Not only do we offer cheap renewable energy at a competitive rate, but we also assist in all the administrative processes and the implementation of these companies. These are the main reasons why some of those large American technological companies chose us,” reveals President Azcón.

Further showcasing that Aragon has become a European center for the technology industry, the region held a brand new tech expo earlier this year that was attended by companies such as AWS, Microsoft, IBM and LinkedIn. Called ‘The Wave’, the conference focused on the latest digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain and cybersecurity.

The renewable revolution

As mentioned by President Azcón, another leading factor behind the decision of technology companies to invest in Aragon is that the region has become a European leader in renewable energy. This allows it to offer remarkable competitive power tariffs, which is vitally important for data centers.

In 2022, more than 75% of Aragon’s elec-

tricity generation came from renewable sources and this percentage is set to increase in the years ahead. This is due to a concerted effort to harness wind and solar power. Last year, Light-source bp announced an expansion of its solar projects in Zaragoza, while German company BayWa r.e. broke ground on its 188 megawatts Rueda Sur wind and solar energy cluster outside of Zaragoza in March of this year.

Consisting of three wind farms with a capacity of 135 megawatts peak and two solar farms with a capacity of 53 megawatts peak, it is scheduled to be connected to the grid by the end of 2025.

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“Aragon is one of the autonomous communities that produces the most renewable energy, making the energy price extremely competitive.”

Iberdrola España has also doubled its renewable commitment to Aragon as it bids to deliver 500 megawatts in the near future. The company already has 11 wind farms in the region, with a total installed capacity of 376 megawatts that provides electricity to thousands of Aragonese households.

Portuguese company EDP also launched its first hybrid solar and wind farm recently, with the Robonsera project in the municipality of Luna set to produce more than 14,000 megawatts hours per year.

“Aragon is one of the autonomous communities that produces the most renewable energy,

making the energy price extremely competitive compared to any other European region. This, combined with government conditions and our willingness to open our doors to companies, has led the world’s leading technological companies to choose our community,” explains President Azcón.

In addition to solar and wind energy, Aragon is also exploring hydrogen, with one of the most significant projects being the construction of a production plant in Zaragoza that is set to span 14 acres. This is just the latest in a string of hydrogen projects that includes Hysencia, a 35 megawatts electrolysis and 49 megawatts solar PV project that is one of the few commercial renewable hydrogen production projects in Europe to receive an environmental permit.

Another major milestone is a joint project between the government of Aragon and Raven SR that will become the first European hub for converting organic waste into sustainable hydrogen. Currently under construction in Zaragoza, the facility is expected to produce approximately 1.8 million kilograms of hydrogen annually, with operations set to get underway in 2026.

These projects not only reflect Aragon’s commitment to innovative energy solutions but also show how they are leading the way in Europe. This can also be seen in the automotive and mobility industry, as the Automotive and Mobility Cluster of Aragon (CAAR) brings together one of the largest concentrations of industrial capacity, knowledge and talent in southern Europe.

Employing 26,000 people, CAAR is capable of producing 450,000 vehicles and invests \$278 million a year in research and development, with much of this assessing the use of new technologies and how to reduce the impact on the environment.



Monte Ducay, a winery in Cariñena



There are thousands of miles of marked trekking routes in Aragon



A dynamic and open business ecosystem

Aragon’s has emerged as one of the most promising regions in southern Europe

Located at the epicenter of the most industrialized parts of Spain and lying right on the Cantabrian-Mediterranean corridor, Aragon has a relatively small population for its size, with 1.3 million inhabitants within its 217 mile radius, but it is able to generate 70% of the national GDP.

Home to three major cities — Zaragoza, Huesca and Teruel — which are surrounded by large cities such as Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Bilbao, as well as five international airports, including the top three cargo airports in Spain. Aragon also boasts impressive road and rail connections, as well as four ports on the Mediterranean coast and three on the Atlantic.

The capital of Zaragoza is also extremely well-connected thanks to its location in the valley of the Ebro, the largest river in Spain, while visitors to the city will enjoy picturesque views of the Pyrenees Mountain range to the north.

However, it is not just Aragon’s prime location between Europe and Africa and its excellent transport infrastructure that has helped the region to become firmly established as one of the most promising in all of southern Europe. It is also the government’s commitment to delivering for its institutions and its citizens through business competencies and good labor relations.

Dedicated to creating a pro-business environment, companies looking to set up in the region are well looked after by local administrations which will support and even fast-track certain projects. This has helped Aragon to achieve the best time-to-cost ratio for starting up a company in the whole of Spain.

Aragon has an abundant amount of land available for development and a multimodal logistics infrastructure. Furthermore, the professional competency of its citizens are the result of a strong commitment to innovation and training efforts on the part of public and private institutions. There are dozens of secondary and higher education centers, as well as three universities, including the renowned University of Zaragoza which was founded back in 1542.

One of the oldest universities in Spain, it has extensive experience in teaching and research in renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainability thanks to the participation of different research institutes in bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

It has also provided a direct pathway to many of the industries that are booming in Aragon, including the dynamic automobile sector. There are numerous manufacturing plants in and around the region, including those of GM, Ford, Volkswagen, Citroën and PSA, as well as a reputable network of adjacent industries that are at the forefront of technological developments and are always looking to hire local talent.

A strong economic outlook

Aragon has a dynamic, growth-oriented economy. In 2023, its GDP increased by 2.1%, a figure well above the European average of 0.5%. This is in part thanks to a strong internationalization component, with exports equivalent to almost 40% of regional GDP.

High productivity means that the region’s

nominal GDP per capita is substantially higher than the national average. All this constitutes an exceptional ecosystem for the development of large investment projects and the establishment of companies.

The creation of a sophisticated infrastructure for service providers has enabled the Aragonese community to become one of the largest logistics centers in the south of the continent. Any project will find space in Aragon to develop and grow, thanks to its wide range of land and offices in various locations and the proactivity that is characteristic of its population and institutions.

In addition to several logistics hubs throughout Aragon, the region is also home to the Zaragoza Logistics Center (ZLC), a research institute established in 2003 by the Government of Aragon in partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the University of Zaragoza.

Specialized in logistics and supply chain management, ZLC is the Spanish center of the MIT Global SCALE Network, an international alliance of six leading research centers dedicated to the development of supply chain excellence through innovation.

In addition to a flourishing logistics sector, Aragon’s other main industries include automotive, ICT, advanced manufacturing, health, aeronautics, energy and agriculture. As explained by the President of Aragon, Jorge Azcón, it is “a region that prioritizes investment projects”.

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Technology giants such as Amazon Web Services and Microsoft have chosen Aragon to implement data centers for their cloud services, attracting other companies in the sector and promoting access to ICT training across the community.

Most recently, global alternative asset manager Blackstone unveiled plans to channel \$8.2 billion worth of investment into the development of data centers in Zaragoza. The investment is set to focus on a 552 acre site and will see the construction of facilities with an electrical capacity of 300 megawatts when fully operational, managed through Blackstone’s QTS unit.

But there are hundreds of other multinational and local companies that have discovered a promising place to grow and develop their respective businesses. Among them is Stellantis, whose Zaragoza plant produces three different models of electric and conventional cars, taking advantage of the wide range of renewable energies available.

Adidas’ offices in the Aragonese capital constitute a technological hub for the entire company and serve as its mainland headquarters. Becton Dickinson, Teva, Baxter and Cencora



An aerial view of the majestic Cathedral-Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar in Zaragoza

(Alliance Healthcare), as well as manufacturers of pharmaceutical products and medical devices, have thrived in the territory and benefited from a large ecosystem of local suppliers and logistics services.

B/H/S España, a company based in Zaragoza, operates two household appliance manufacturing plants and a central warehouse in Aragon, in addition to having five of its nine R&D teams here.

From the capital Zaragoza, Inditex Group distributes all of Zara’s women’s clothing to the rest of the world, amounting to some 350 million items a year. The company has been continuously expanding its Aragonese facilities since they were established in 2001.

The military industry is also well-established in Aragon, with 10% of the Spanish Ministry of Defense’s suppliers based in this region, which also houses the second-largest military facility in Spain, after the capital, Madrid, with more than 10,000 professional stationed soldiers. As such, companies like Arpa, Instalaza, Aernnova, Uplifting, Mecanus and others in the army supplies sector, have chosen Aragon.

Government support

Aragon’s institutions offer support and flexibility to businesses that wish to set up in the region during their implementation process at regional, national and EU level. To this end, the Government of Aragon has several legal instruments that enable it to accelerate strategic projects. These include the Declaration of General Interest for the Region (DIGA), which allows expedited processing of permits and the Investment Project of General Interest for the Region” (PIGA), a tool designed to reduce administrative timeframes and speed up the process of land allocation for urbanization projects.

Furthermore, Aragon offers a favorable tax framework with access to aid and incentives from public entities, as well as schemes to support the internationalization of companies.

A vision for the future

Aragon is a clear exponent of the triple helix innovation model, in which industry, knowledge centers and institutions interact to promote economic and social development in industries as diverse as logistics, aerospace, nanotechnology,

automotive, ICT, and AI.

The community has more than 40 institutions involved in close public-private collaboration. These include ITA Innova, the largest innovation center in Aragon which specializes in logistics, the automotive industry and IT. There is also TechnoPark, a technology park and racing circuit approved by international federations, where tech companies can test their products.

The cluster model is the most suitable for bringing business sectors together. There are 11 business clusters in Aragon, including ALIA (logistics and mobility), AERA (aerospace and defense), and CAAR (automotive and mobility), and it is also the headquarters of three other national clusters, the industrial machinery cluster, Anmopyc, the Spanish pig cluster, i+Porc, and the cluster of companies linked to the world of elevators, AECAE.

Furthermore, Aragon is fully committed to sustainability. Thanks to its excellent natural resources — wind, sun, hydrogen, and the largest river in Spain, the Ebro — the region produces 82% of its energy from renewable sources and generates a surplus of 120% of the total energy demand of the territory. Local water and energy supplies are guaranteed by a solid electricity network with more than 90 substations and 400 reservoirs and water treatment plants (including some that are still under construction).

Talent and quality of life

According to the National Institute of Statistics, Aragon is ranked third among the Spanish regions for quality of life, thanks to its work conditions and leisure facilities. It is a family-friendly territory, with a wide range of educational options, universal health coverage, an affordable cost of living, excellent gastronomy, a vibrant cultural heritage and welcoming people who are easy to get to know and network with.

It also has the most competitive labor costs of north-eastern Spain’s most developed regions, with excellent training, great rates of company loyalty and a pleasant working environment. Its staff is highly qualified in both academic and vocational training professions, thanks to its public and private universities and a network of more than 1,000 vocational training centers.



Jorge Azcón announcing the investment from Amazon Web Services

Creating a brighter and greener future

Since being elected as the President of Aragon, Jorge Azcón has transformed the region into a leader in renewable energy production through a host of innovative, green initiatives

Aragon has always had a special place in the heart of Jorge Azcón. Born in Zaragoza in 1973, he went on to attend the University of Zaragoza where he obtained a degree in law before completing a master’s in urban planning. It was during this time that he developed an interest in politics, officially joining the People’s Party in 1993.

Azcón would then go on to become the leader of the New Generations of the People’s Party in the province of Zaragoza as he actively tried to involve young people in politics. Working in this role for several years, his next position would see him land a job as a councillor during José Atarés’ tenure (from 2000-2003) as the Mayor of Zaragoza.

Once again tasked with attracting young people into politics, he would quickly progress and took up a position as the party’s assistant spokesperson. During this time, he would even go on television to debate the leader of the opposition, Juan Alberto Belloch, despite being in his twenties and still relatively new to politics.

He continued to work in this role for another four years before taking a short break from politics. However, he would not stay away for long as in 2010 he secured a role as a coordinator for the People’s Party of Aragon. Excelling in the position, he eventually worked his way up and in 2016 was chosen to be the new spokesman for the party.

By 2019, Azcón had cemented his status as a star in the People’s Party of Aragon and was elected as Mayor of Zaragoza. During his time in this role, Azcón announced an ambitious plan to create a forest with more than 700,000 trees. Hailed as one of the most ambitious urban reforestation projects in Europe, The Forest of the Zaragozanos continues to expand each year and is now home to almost 200,000 trees and shrubs.

In his role as mayor, Azcón also supported several projects for increased mobility, the main one being HERA Drone Hub. This made Zaragoza the first city in Europe which authorized space for testing, experimentation and the training of drones. These drones were then used to supplement research efforts by the City Council.

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In his fight to reduce pollution, he also transformed the public bus network into a fully electric one, either adapting or changing buses for those that were capable of running on electricity.

Following his successful tenure as mayor, Azcón was elected as the President of Aragon in 2023. He has since helped to transform the region into one of Europe’s leading tech hubs, with companies such as Amazon Web Services and Microsoft investing heavily in Aragon.

In the interview below, President Azcón reflects on his time as mayor, outlines some of the most important projects taking place in Aragon and reveals his long-term plan for the region.

You worked as Mayor of Zaragoza between 2019 and 2023 before taking up your position as President of Aragon. Can you describe your political evolution and what have been some of the most significant developments that have impacted the lives of citizens in the region?

I served as the Mayor of Zaragoza for four years before becoming the President of Aragon and have been able to improve the support we have from our citizens and increase the number of votes we received, which is always nice to achieve.

In Aragon, we’ve decided to make our own decisions and take charge of our own future. We hope to achieve that through economic growth. Aragon may have a small population but we are one of the largest regions in Spain so there is room to grow. This has helped us become a leading player in the energy sector. Today, Ara-



Teruel Airport serves as an important hub for the logistics industry

ed or plans to implement to invigorate the Aragonese territory?

Aragon has large economic engines, primarily based on the automobile industry, but also the food and logistics sectors. Now, we are looking to another potential driver of the economy, which is the technology industry. However, the government’s policies are not just focused on these areas as we know that to generate prosperity, we need significant economic growth.

By achieving this, we will be able to better fund public services which is why in my first budget I increased the funding for education, healthcare and social policies by 10%. This year, we have also been able to reduce taxes, mainly income tax for the middle class.

We are also working on an important and strong project related to housing, with more than \$328 million allocated to housing for those who need it the most. We will produce a significant number of houses on behalf of the public administration. Another area of focus is education and centering it on technology. We also want to give more freedom to parents so that they can choose the schools most appropriate for their children.

Then there is the healthcare sector as we want to attract more doctors. We have introduced a retention program so that doctors who want to come to Aragon can have better working and social conditions, making it an extremely important sector. Finally, one of the biggest projects is related to the environment. In Aragon, we have the main mountain range of the Iberian Peninsula, which is an incredible destination for snow activities. Therefore, we would to turn this into a tourism attraction and it is a project we will be working on over the coming years.

In terms of GDP evolution and direct investment, how does Aragon compare with other autonomous communities? Also, do you believe there is a problem

with state funding towards peripheral regions like Aragon?

Aragon is growing above the average in Spain. In fact, our economy has been growing above the national average for the last couple of years. This is driven largely by the industry sector which provides 20% of our GDP. Industry has become the backbone of our economy and is one of our major strengths.

Regarding the differences and the Spanish government’s treatment of the rest of the autonomous communities, there is a weakness. The Spanish government depends on the votes of nationalists from specific autonomous com-

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munities. This forces the government to make promises it cannot keep. The government promised they wouldn’t pardon those who tried to break the government, but they were forced to do so because they needed votes. Now, they have to give more than \$16 million to Catalonia. The main problem is that the new financing system for the autonomous communities is conditioned by the needs of Catalonia and the needs of Pedro Sánchez’s partners, and does not consider the peculiarities of other communities.

What departments, public companies and other agents are behind Aragon’s successful model?

I wanted to be highly involved when I became President and economic development was one of my first priorities. Therefore, the first thing that I did after being elected was to create an economic vice presidency, which serves as the foundation for our autonomous community’s instruments.

I also wanted to have a department directly connected to myself so that all of the companies that want to invest in our community do not face interruptions. Companies that are willing to invest millions can have a direct connection to our government. I did that when I was working as the Mayor of Zaragoza and I continue to do it now as the President of this autonomous community. Attracting investments and companies means creating new jobs, which means creating prosperity for everybody.

What is your long-term vision for the region, and what key objectives do you hope to achieve during your term?

The world will undergo a decarbonization process of the economy, an electrification process, and a change in energy consumption models. This makes our autonomous community extraordinarily interesting for those with high energy consumption demands as they require cheap energy. One of the best examples I can give is Microsoft as we are working with them so that one of the largest factories in Europe will be housed in Aragon.

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We already have an important car manufacturing plant in the capital of Aragon but that factory needs to transform as they need a gigafactory. So we will play an important role in that process. We recognize that the energy needs of companies are changing around the world so we want to be at the forefront of this push for renewable energy.

Finally, what is the message you would give to investors around the globe who are interested in Aragon?

They will receive the best possible welcome because Aragon understands that the well-being of society is connected to the growth of our economy and being able to generate prosperity that can then be distributed back among the population.

That’s why our autonomous community’s own resources, our ideal location in Spain, and the generation of renewable energy give us a privileged position in the logistics industry. Furthermore, we prioritize investment projects. Therefore, we are able to shorten the process. When someone wants to generate prosperity in our community, we will do everything that we can to help them.

ARAGON FACTS AND FIGURES

Aragon is a leading logistics hub with excellent access to the Spanish, European and MENA markets

The region has received significant investment from leading tech firms such as Amazon Web Solutions

Aragon is home to a booming automotive industry, including more than 350 auto companies

Aragon is a global leader in the production and export of black truffles

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A landlocked region in northeastern Spain, Aragon comprises the provinces of Huesca, Zaragoza and Teruel. Covering an area of 18,424-square-miles, it is home to 1.3 million people.

40%

Aragon is export-oriented with exports amounting to 40% of regional GDP

1.8m

Aragon welcomed 1.8 million visitors in the first quarter of 2024

3.4%

Aragon recorded economic growth of 3.4% in the second quarter of 2024

82%

Of electrical generation comes from renewable sources

Microsoft plans to invest \$7.16 billion in developing new data centers in Aragon

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Companies:

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Advisory body:

Connecting the world



The Pyrenean village of Lanuza

Explore a land of contrasts

Home to wide valleys, lush forests and impressive mountains, Aragon is not only full of natural wonders but also ancient architecture and modern attractions

It is little wonder that Aragon is emerging as a must-visit destination in Europe. The region offers riches wherever you travel, from the stunning Mudéjar architecture of Teruel in the south to the striking castles and churches in the north. The capital, Zaragoza, is equally appealing thanks to its rich culture, gastronomic delights and an array of nightlife.

But perhaps what makes Aragon so special is the different landscapes. Throughout the vast territory, visitors will find fertile plains, open valleys and steep forests. Then there's the majesty of the central Pyrenees along the northern fringe of the region which offers access to a beautiful section of the mountain range. Here there is a wealth of activities to enjoy, from skiing and paragliding to rafting and climbing.

A paradise for snow and mountain sports enthusiasts, there are alpine and cross-country skiing resorts that provide access to endless slopes surrounded by snow-capped forests. The Pyrenees and the Iberian mountain system have also become a destination of choice for those looking to try hiking, dog sledding and snowshoeing.

Thanks to this varied offering, Aragon has enjoyed a notable increase in tourist arrivals, as Jorge Moncada, the Director General of Tourism Aragon, explains: "We can't compete with Andalusia, Catalonia, Galicia, the Basque Country, or any other coastal region with sun

A unique destination with a varied offering

Aragon offers a blend of culture, gastronomy, tradition, nature and heritage all in one place

In the following interview, we hear from the Director General of Tourism Aragon, Jorge Moncada, about the economic impact of tourism in the region and why the US has become a target market.

The tourism sector in Aragon has made a substantial contribution to the regional economy, in line with Spain's overall GDP figure which sees over 11% tourism contribution to GDP. What strategies are being implemented to further increase this economic impact of tourism?

We are focusing on increasing international promotion. Our main message to convince international tourists is: "Don't leave Spain without visiting Aragon." Our strategy is not to compete with other destinations within Spain, which would be unwise. Instead, we suggest that if you are traveling from Madrid to Barcelona, stay a couple of nights in Zaragoza or visit Aragon. Above all, don't leave Spain without experiencing our autonomous community.

This is a key message we are promoting internationally. Additionally, Aragon is central to Spain's historical and cultural identity. For American tourists, heritage is particularly interesting. The union between Castile and Aragon created Spain, and our cultural and historical heritage is significant. This aspect is essential for international tourists who are looking for more than just sun and beaches. They seek unique values like heritage, nature, culture and gastronomy, which are the main pillars of our community and our tourism appeal.

Could you elaborate on your current campaigns to attract international investors and which are your target markets? Why should American visitors choose Aragon?

We are engaging in a diverse range of activities. We have visited Central America, then North America including Mexico, with stops in Guadalajara, Monterrey and Mexico City. We have also been to Medellín in Colombia. Next, we will visit Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

Why this strategy? We believe there is significant economic potential from individuals with high disposable incomes who visit Europe. Instead of them staying in Madrid's Salaman-



The striking Mallos de Riglos rock formations



Jorge Moncada
Director General, Tourism Aragon

Another destination within Aragon that perfectly blends the old and the new is the regional capital of Zaragoza. Home to the exquisite multi-domed Basilica del Pilar and an array of monuments that showcase Roomanesque, Christian and Islamic architecture, the city is also brimming with museums and features one of the best tapas scenes in the whole of Spain.

Beyond the major cities, visitors will discover dozens of picturesque medieval villages, all with their own unique charm. Albarracín is like nowhere else in Spain thanks to its pink-hued medieval houses, while Sos del Rey Católico has been declared a historic artistic site and features one of the best medieval sites in Aragon.

With so much to see and do within Aragon, one of the current challenges for Moncada is ensuring that visitors extend their stay in the region. "Currently, the average hotel stay in Aragon is around 2.5 nights, while in apartments it is a bit higher at around 3.5 nights," he explains. "These figures indicate that while we have a steady flow of tourists, there is room for improvement in extending the duration of stays."

That is why Tourism Aragon has launched several campaigns aimed at highlighting the varied offering in the region, including a range of attractions that are ideal for families. This includes Zaragoza Amusement Park which is open from March to October and offers a whole host of attractions from rides to an Olym-



Skiing enthusiasts will love Aragon

government, the government of Aragon, local authorities, and private companies. This collaboration is resulting in the development of several new infrastructures that will soon be operational.

One such initiative is the installation of a toboggan run in Panticosa. Additionally, we are working on connecting the Astún and Candanchú ski resorts and the installation of a gondola lift in Benasque. This gondola will provide easy access to the Cerler ski resort, which currently requires a difficult journey. The new gondola will transport visitors directly from the town to the top of the station.

These infrastructures will significantly enhance the adventure tourism landscape in Aragon by 2026.

Collaboration with neighboring regions and international markets is crucial for tourism growth. What partnerships have been formed, and how do they contribute to the strategic goals of Aragon's tourism sector? What opportunities exist specifically for American investors?

I believe Aragon is currently a technological and logistical hub, the largest in Europe. Our

The government in Aragon is supporting innovation across numerous sectors as it bids to strengthen the economy

Born in San Sebastián, Mar Vaquero would move to Aragon to continue her studies, earning a law degree from the University of Zaragoza and a master's in international relations. She would then go on to complete a further degree in labor law and social security.

A member of the Illustrious College of Lawyers of Zaragoza since 1995, she put her legal practice on hiatus in the early 2000s to pursue a career in politics. Elected as the Mayor of María de Huerva in 2007, Vaquero stayed in the role for 12 years before becoming secretary-general of the People's Party of Aragon in 2017.

Elected as the party's parliamentary spokesperson in 2022, she was then appointed as the Vice President and Counselor of Economy, Employment and Industry after Jorge Azcón became the new President of Aragon in 2023.

In the interview below, Vaquero discusses how Aragon has become a technological hub in Europe and explains why so many large companies are investing in the region.

Aragon's GDP is projected to increase by 1.8% in 2024 and 2.4% in 2025, resulting in the creation of 25,000 jobs over these two years, indicating robust economic growth. How is the regional government planning to sustain this momentum and ensure that the benefits of job creation are evenly distributed across all sectors of the economy?

Aragon is currently experiencing a very positive economic and employment situation. In fact, the GDP forecast for the budget was initially 1.8%, but we increased it to 2% due to the economic dynamic and current context, allowing us to be more optimistic. We were very cautious initially, even when economic organizations set this at 1.8%, but after the first trimester of the year, we felt confident enough to adjust it to 2%. Regarding employment creation, the 25,000 jobs are the ones estimated by different organizations that will be needed to support new investments. The Aragon government is very focused on ensuring that the workforce required is well-prepared through professional profiles, including university and academic training, tailored to companies' needs.

One of the main requests from companies is to have trained personnel. These trainings need to have a technological value. The technological revolution Aragon is experiencing will be the largest driver for our economy. Not only for the giant technology companies that have arrived in Aragon, such as Amazon and Microsoft, with investments surpassing 15 billion euros, but also because other sectors that have traditionally been leaders in Aragon, like agri-food, logistics, and industry, mainly automotive, can benefit from technology and innovation, thus increasing competitiveness and productivity.

That's the main goal of the Aragon government. We know we are a technological hub in Europe, the region attracting the most technological investments at a national and European level. We want technology to be the value that increases the competitiveness of all sectors in Aragon.

How is the government facilitating large American investments?

The goal of the legislation was to attract investments, but we also have to set a purpose or commitment in Aragon to foster our local



The entrance to the Technological Museum of Mobility in Zaragoza



Mar Vaquero
Vicepresident of the Aragon Government

productive sector. We don't forget about SMEs in Aragon that have been working for decades, and they also have these investment opportunities. We have Aragonese companies like Grupo Costa that have announced many investments. The Inditex group, which has been operating in Aragon, has chosen Aragon as its 5th most important logistics center. The Aragon government is focused on attracting investments but also strengthening what we already have. For us, it's a value.

The mechanism to attract investments, both from abroad and within, is through the Accelerated Investment Unit, which involves the coordination of all government departments and administrative simplification. We have tools like declarations of general autonomous interest or projects of general autonomous interest. With this coordination of all government departments and the creation of specialized workgroups, we accelerate all processes related to licenses, reports in departments, and everything else. We've provided speed and agility so that the administration is not a problem but something that goes smoothly with licenses.

Aragon is a pivotal hub for the automotive industry, hosting more than 350 automobile companies and significant facilities. What measures are being taken by the regional government to maintain and expand Aragon's leadership in the automotive sector, especially in light of global competition?

We've talked about a technological revolution that can and will transform the economy in Aragon in the next decade, similar to how the arrival of General Motors transformed our economy in the past. This has created an ecosystem around GM, with automotive and parts manufacturing companies that have made Aragon a leading area in this sector.

Currently, the Aragon government is work-

ing to have Stellantis choose Figueruelas for the installation of a gigafactory. This is a state project, not just important for Aragon but also for the sector at a national level. Stellantis represents the manufacturing of more than 30% of vehicles in Spain, and we believe it will help not only in the transition to electric cars in the future but also in anchoring the current automotive sector.

We need this gigafactory to consolidate what we have and to grow in the important sector of electric vehicles. For this, the Aragon government is working with the company, and we have approved economic measures to prepare what currently exists at the Stellantis platform prior to the gigafactory. What's important is that with the commitment of the Aragon government and the company's interest in installing in Figueruelas, the Spanish government can also get involved through Strategic Projects for Economic Recovery and Transformation. We need this to support this project in Aragon.

The agri-food sector in Aragon, with nearly 1,000 companies, contributes over 10% to the region's GDP and is crucial for the local economy. What strategies are being implemented to support the growth, sustainability, and international competitiveness of Aragon's agri-food industry?

The main strategy is to support technological and innovation processes in the agri-food sector, which Aragonese companies are currently focusing on. We believe the pork sector is the most significant, and innovation in each

MAR VAQUERO, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE ARAGON GOVERNMENT

"Aragon has great potential due to our wind and solar energy resources, which allow us to explore new sectors and consolidate existing ones."

productive process is crucial. Additionally, we emphasize technology as well as energy. Aragon has great potential due to our wind and solar energy resources, which allow us to explore new sectors and consolidate existing ones.

The region is advancing its sustainability goals through initiatives like the Aragon Circular Strategy, which promotes a circular economy. Can you share some notable success stories from this initiative?

Traditional companies in Aragon have adopted a business model that is multisectorial with a strong focus on sustainability. A large part of our GDP is contributed by family businesses that are integral to our economy. In Aragon, we understand that sustainability

Promoting the local business community

The Aragonese Development Institute plays a vital role in helping companies to grow

An essential component of any region is its business network. Aragon is no different with its rich business enclave and peculiarities that have always set it apart from the rest of Spain. These now offer a glimpse into a future of opportunities for companies and for the development of different professions.

Aragon is strategically positioned, connected to urban hubs in the center, north, and south of the Iberian Peninsula, and boasts a proud history in the agri-food and logistics sectors. Today, more and more sectors are seeing the growth possibilities that the region offers. The arrival of tech companies will make a big contribution nationally and internationally; from Aragon to the rest of the world.

The Government of Aragon appreciates this trend and has a division that is responsible for promoting companies through different means. The Aragonese Development Institute (IAF) is a development agency charged with helping local companies grow.

With more than three decades of work behind it, IAF is now focused on supporting the innovation, growth and competitiveness of Aragonese companies based on four important values. Accessibility, since the IAF is committed to a relationship of clarity and proximity with professionals; trust to guarantee solvency; innovation to promote new ideas, technologies and collaborations; and commitment, through which they work proactively to help Aragon, Spain, and the rest of the world grow.

This mission and these values would be nothing without action, which is why the IAF is focusing its efforts on strategic programs spread across five priority areas.

Five strategic programs of the IAF

Collaboration and specialization are two key aspects of these programs, since there is no growth without focus and without cooperation between different companies, institutions, entities and professionals.

With more than three decades of work behind it, IAF is now focused on supporting the innovation, growth and competitiveness of Aragonese companies

Their actions are grouped into five separate initiatives. IAF Growth aims to promote growth in the region and increase the size and capabilities of its companies. IAF Innovation promotes technology and digitalization across Aragonese society, connecting companies with the rest of the world.

IAF Entrepreneurship supports seed ideas, small businesses, and emerging sectors, and focuses on their acceleration, scalability, and professionalization. IAF Territory focuses on the three provinces of Huesca, Zaragoza, and



Aragon is home to a booming automotive industry

Teruel to promote their growth, solvency, professionalization, and interconnectedness with other regions.

Finally, IAF Connect is responsible for keeping the government on the side of Aragonese companies with clear, accessible information and direct communication with industry professionals.

These five pillars guarantee that the IAF can collaborate with and unite various business sectors. Aragon unites the wealth of the countryside, agriculture and livestock. It takes advantage of its logistics potential as an epicenter of distribution and transport. And now it is looking to the future to strengthen its tech sector through the arrival of global technological

giants that will scale the capabilities of our rich community here in Aragon.

The IAF has great ambitions for the immediate future, with a focus on companies and without losing sight of its core values. The people of Aragon are themselves the foundation of this bright future. Their rich and diverse talents will draw like-minded people to the region and will make Aragon everything it is destined to be.

Aragon's production of renewable energy is a major competitive advantage, generating 8% of Spain's energy while consuming only 4%. How can renewables support new businesses and boost Aragon's reputation as an energy hub in Europe?

This is a main factor in attracting new investments. The investments we are now having in Aragon are not only due to our geostrategic position, located 186 miles from key GDP centers like Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Bilbao, but also because of our strong logistics sector that enhances communication. Being in the middle of the main national GDP, our renewable energy strength makes companies choose Aragon not only for sustainability commitments but also for the potential energy cost savings. We produce more energy than we consume, so we want companies to settle in Aragon to help balance those numbers. We've been very favored by the latest electric network projects because we've presented feasible projects for the coming years, which has made the electric network consider these projects for licensing.

Aragon's strategic location provides excellent connectivity for logistics and transportation companies, enhancing its appeal as a business destination. What is your final message to American businesses and investors thinking of choosing Aragon as their destination to set up their business?

Aragon, apart from having energy and a commitment to sustainability with renewable energy resources, also offers legal security, which is very important for companies. Together with simplified processes and administrative support, we help companies settle here. Additionally, the social dialogue in Aragon is crucial. The lack of conflict and the strong relationship between companies, unions and the Aragon government, is something highly appreciated. This three-part alliance stands out in the national context.

The Aragon government is creating a shield to protect companies and human capital. We are heavily investing in training talent. Aragon is a source of talent, and we are working with universities to produce and attract talent back to Aragon. We offer a great quality of life and a promising future for people who want to return.



An aerial view of Plaza Logistics Park

Plaza Logistics Park: the driving force behind Aragon’s booming logistics sector

An excellent location, wide connectivity and multi-faceted infrastructure has contributed to the success of the logistics hub in Zaragoza

Located in the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula, Aragon has become a gateway to southern Europe and a meeting point between two of the most dynamic regions of the continent: the Atlantic axis and the Mediterranean region. This strategic location and the availability of industrial land have enabled the region to emerge as a leading logistics hub.

This has been helped by Aragon being home to an excellent transport infrastructure that connects it by land, sea and air to the rest of the world. One of the key pieces of this logistics landscape is Zaragoza Airport which is recognized as the second national cargo airport and transports goods to more than 40 international destinations.

Rail transport is another strong point for Aragon and the government is constantly investing in new infrastructure such as the Zaragoza-Algeciras Rail-Motorway, which will connect Aragon with North Africa and boost international trade. Furthermore, despite being an inland region, maritime terminals such as Zaragoza Maritime Terminal, Monzón Intermodal Terminal and the JCV Company Terminal, enable rapid connections with leading ports in Barcelona, Bilbao and Valencia.

With these impressive transport links in place, it is no surprise that Aragon is home to the largest logistics facility in Europe. Covering an area of more than 139 million square feet, Plaza Logistic Park has become the destination of choice for leading companies across a range of sectors, including DHL, Porcelanosa, Decathlon, Inditex and DB Schenker.

“We are strategically located and boast the largest intermodal railway terminal in southern Europe, with 16 electrified tracks. We are also close to the second-largest cargo airport in Spain which is crucial for the likes of Inditex which transports merchandise worldwide by air,” explains Pedro Sas, CEO of Plaza Logistics Park in Zaragoza.

“In addition, while Zaragoza does not have a sea port, we do have access to ports through dry ports. We have the largest dry port in Spain, the Maritime Terminal of Zaragoza, which is located around three miles from Plaza Logistics Park. This terminal handles the largest number of containers in all of Spain.

PEDRO SAS
CEO, PLAZA LOGISTICS PARK
“We already have a number of US companies in Plaza Logistics Park... and they enjoy numerous benefits of being part of a top-tier logistics hub”

“Thanks to this infrastructure and our privileged location, we have become extremely popular and are currently at 95% capacity, so there are very few plots left. Because of this, we plan to significantly expand with an additional 26.9 million square feet.”

Already home to more than 500 companies, the extra land will provide an opportunity for more large companies to establish a European base. That makes it an extremely enticing opportunity for American businesses that are looking to enter the European market.

“We already have a number of US companies in Plaza Logistics Park such as Amazon Web Services and Microsoft, as well as Cosco Shipping from Great Britain and German powerhouse DHL. They enjoy numerous benefits of being part of a top-tier logistics hub, including



Pedro Sas
CEO, Plaza Logistics Park

the opportunity to collaborate with other major companies and the support of the government in Aragon,” outlines Sas.

“When companies arrive here, the red carpet is rolled out and you will receive excellent support from both our Head of Strategic Projects and Head of Strategic Planning. They can help with customized training programs and the hiring of talent.

“The Aragon Logistics Platform is involved in every stage of the education process, from college students to those pursuing a master’s at the Zaragoza Logistic Center (ZLC). This course is sponsored by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) which oversees our entire training catalogue and has helped us to create one of the top supply chain master’s programs in the world. So what we offer is not just land, we also provide projects, training and talent.

“MIT decided to come to Aragon because it was clear that the government was committed to developing logistics activities in Zaragoza.”

Their goal was to establish the region as a central hub for logistics activities, serving the entire Iberian Peninsula and attracting logistics-focused companies.

“The value of bringing the ZLC lies in creating this axis between academia, research and commercial activities. What sets us apart from other logistics hubs worldwide is our ability to provide new research insights and trained professionals to companies in the logistics sector.

“We also provide ample access to clean, renewable energy, abundant access to water and large plots of up to 10.7 million square feet at a fair price, because the goal is not solely on maximizing profit, but rather generating long-term investment and employment opportunities.”

A sustainable approach

With the European Environment Agency predicting that logistics will account for up to 40% of global carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 unless effective measures are taken, sustainability has become an important issue for logistics companies around the world.

Many are now addressing these concerns through a range of methods, whether it is through the use of biodegradable or recyclable materials in packaging, using electric vehicles to reduce emissions or even utilizing Artificial Intelligence to optimize routes and reduce fuel consumption. Adopting renewable energy solutions is another major factor in the decarbonization strategy of the leading logistics companies.

“We offer numerous clean and renewable energy solutions in Plaza Logistics Park as we have significant production capacity from solar and wind energy. There are also numerous



Plaza Logistics Park is one of the largest intermodal logistics hubs in Europe

green projects underway,” reveals Sas.

“We have also just inaugurated the largest electric vehicle charging station sponsored by Endesa, one of the major electric companies in Spain. It features six double chargers at 300 kilowatts each, which is the latest in modern charging technology.

“We also have biofuel pumps, which is fuel that does not come from petroleum but is derived from food recycling.

“Additionally, we are actively supporting various initiatives to promote public transportation. A dedicated bus service now connects Zaragoza to Plaza Logistics Park, aimed at reducing car usage.

“Another significant sustainability initiative is the railway highways. Europe is shifting towards rail transport so right now we are exploring rail freeways, which is where a truck can be loaded directly onto the train. We already use the Algeciras-Plaza rail freeway which is more than 621 miles in length.

PEDRO SAS
CEO, PLAZA LOGISTICS PARK
“We offer numerous clean and renewable energy solutions in Plaza Logistics Park as we have significant production capacity from solar and wind energy.”

“This is an extremely busy route as Algeciras is the main gateway in Spain used by all of North Africa. So ensuring that these trucks are directly loaded means the number of miles they are forced to drive is drastically reduced. This is extremely important as rail transport is a key way to address sustainability.”

The government of Aragon is also doing its part when it comes to freight transport by improving its efficiency and significantly reducing emissions. This saw the Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda launch a plan late last year to tackle these issues, including the electrification of the crucial Zaragoza-Teruel-Sagunt line.

This initiative includes the construction of traction substations in Cariñena and Villafraanca, as well as the installation of a 220 kilowatt high-voltage overhead line and auto-transformer stations.

The electrification of this line is an important environmental advance as replacing diesel traction with electric traction significantly reducing noise and related emissions.

It will also curiously improve the energy efficiency and sustainability of rail freight across the entire region.

A long-term vision

A strategic priority for the government of Aragon, the logistics industry continues to grow throughout the region. Today, more than 650 companies are located in Aragon and the sector represents 6% of the regional GDP.

The government’s firm commitment to logistics has positioned the region as a space for hosting major sectoral events, including last year when Zaragoza hosted the XII Congress of the Spanish Federation of Freight Forwarders. Furthermore, infrastructure investments have helped to improve operations at the Teruel Logistics Platform, Teruel Airport, the Huesca Logistics Platform and the Fraga Logistics Platform.

The Huesca Logistics Platform has proved particularly successful in attracting global companies, with Amazon Web Services and Nissan both setting up operations in the industrial zone. However, it is Plaza Logistics Park that remains the driving force behind Aragon’s leading logistics sector.

“Our strategic location, multimodality, quality customs services, abundance of affordable land and high-quality platforms are key factors to our success,” says Sas. “The government’s involvement has also been crucial as they are a business-friendly administration that recognizes that we are a hub of economic activity.

“That is why the Projects of General Interest of the Government of Aragon has proved to be extremely useful. This legal tool allows projects of a significant scale to receive administrative concessions and set up operations promptly. This is important when we are discussing multi-billion dollar investment projects that bring thousands of jobs.

“It is the icing on the cake for companies looking to open in Aragon as this tool allows them to shorten the time required to start up a project by more than half.”

Due to the support of the government, the excellent services and facilities, the impressive infrastructure and its strategic location, Plaza Logistics Park looks set to grow significantly in the years ahead.

“The long-term objective for Plaza Logistics Park is to continue growing, improving accessibility and sustainability,” adds Sas. “Additionally, we aim to advance the strategic project that will impact Europe, specifically the railway and upward mobility initiatives.

“We want to ensure that freight transport increases and we are actively engaging in projects aimed at generating wealth and employment through long-term investments. We are always looking to the future and have a long-term vision in mind that will help us to generate increased revenue which will further benefit the people of Aragon.”

A sustainable approach to tourism

A new tourism strategy from Aragon focuses on social and environmental sustainability

Known for its rich culture, historical attractions and gastronomic delights, Aragon has attracted a growing number of international visitors in recent years. With arrival figures expected to continue on an upward trajectory, the government of Aragon has recognized the importance of protecting the environment and ensuring the region retains its natural beauty.

In order to achieve this, Aragon’s tourism sector is undergoing a transformative stage that, with the help of European Union recovery funds, focuses on sustainability. “Presently, we have 34 sustainability tourism plans spread across municipalities and districts throughout Aragon aimed at modernizing our hotel offerings from an energy-efficient and sustainable perspective,” explains Manuel Blasco, Minister of Environment and Tourism.

“Simultaneously, utilizing these funds and others, we are advancing the Pirineos Plan: a comprehensive initiative that spans multiple governmental areas, with tourism as a primary focus. Our objective is to reduce the dependency on seasonal snow tourism, as snowfall is becoming less predictable, with fewer occurrences during Christmas and more in February, March, and even July at times.

MANUEL BLASCO
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM
“Many of our sustainability plans are centered around eco-friendly initiatives such as natural trails for hiking.”

“Investments in these municipalities are strategically timed outside typical snowfall months. We aim to diversify tourism activities in the Pyrenees that do not rely on snow, such as non-snow sports facilities. Additionally, the Pirineos Plan focuses on enhancing tourist facilities, infrastructure, roads and communication networks.”

With a sustainable tourism strategy focusing on digitalization, social and environmental sustainability, and enhancing connectivity, Aragon is incorporating these pillars into development plans to attract more international visitors, especially those from North and South America.

“Many of our sustainability plans are centered around eco-friendly initiatives such as natural trails for hiking and cycling tourism, and nature-based experiences,” outlines Blasco. “Investments in infrastructure, like build-



Manuel Blasco
Minister of Environment and Tourism

ings to support these activities, are critical. Future plans include creating green routes that could span up to 37 miles, connecting Valencia through Aragon to Catalonia. Additionally, projects like the reversion of mining areas in Teruel province aim to transform former industrial zones into tourist attractions.

“This year, we have also launched a tourism campaign in South America and the US, including visits to Mexico, Colombia, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Miami. Our goal is to attract millions of Spanish-speaking visitors who share cultural and religious affinities, fostering significant connections.”

With an increasing focus on sustainability, the government is working tirelessly to ensure that it finds the right balance between growing the tourism industry and preserving Aragon’s natural and cultural heritage. This led to the ministries of environment and tourism coming under one authority.

“Our goal is to dissolve the misconception that tourism and environmental preservation are at odds. Currently, Aragon boasts four natural parks and a national park that is a crown jewel of the region, along with three parks in the Pyrenees and one each in Huesca and Zaragoza,” adds Blasco. “We are using European funds to adapt and renovate these parks, particularly to restrict vehicle access. Instead of allowing private vehicles, we are introducing buses or shuttles to access these areas, crucial during peak visitor seasons to prevent overcrowding. Most plans involve digitalizing our offerings, enabling online ticketing to manage visitor numbers effectively. Protecting our national parks is paramount to us.”

Attracting investment

Aragon has emerged as an inviting destination for foreign investors, especially from the US

With an abundance of land, a focus on renewable energy resources and a government that is committed to streamlining administrative processes, Aragon has been able to attract massive investment from some of the world’s leading technology companies.

One of the most significant came earlier this year when Amazon Web Services (AWS) announced a \$17 billion investment in Aragon, the largest investment in the region’s history and one of the most significant in Europe. This project included the expansion of AWS’s existing three data centres in Huesca and Zaragoza and the establishment of a fourth in Zaragoza’s capital.

Now the government of Aragon hopes to attract more international investment in sectors such as health, education and technology, and is particularly interested in foreign investors from the United States.

“The US is one of the priority markets within our foreign investment attraction strategy. We are proud to have a significant number of American companies already established in the region, in industries as diverse as the pharmaceutical sector, automotive, logistics, and technology,” outlines Roberto Bermúdez de Castro, Minister of Finance, Administration and Interior. “Recently, the implementation projects of AWS and Microsoft were announced, with investments exceeding \$22 billion. These investments represent a turning point for Aragon and demonstrate how attractive our region is to American companies.

“We are following a very personalized support strategy for new business expansion projects from American companies interested in establishing themselves in Europe, while also promoting new growth initiatives for already established American subsidiaries.

“We have both reactive and proactive strategies when it comes to attracting investments, which involves strengthening ties with strategic regions and industries in the US, reaching out to companies and identifying potential investments. Investment projects are long and complex processes, and one of our greatest strengths is the personalized attention to investors, with the full support of the regional government, which greatly speeds up the procedures and processes.”

Outlining the competitive advantages for American businesses looking to set up operations in Aragon, de Castro adds: “Our strategic locations means that within a 621 mile radius, we have Central Europe and North Africa, and within a 217 mile radius, 70% of Spain’s GDP and the majority of industrial production.

“In addition to our unparalleled location, we offer ample land, a sophisticated multimodal logistics infrastructure, abundant renewable



Roberto Bermúdez de Castro
Minister of Finance, Administration and Interior

energy, advanced R&D and a highly qualified workforce.”

Creating a highly skilled and qualified workforce has long been a priority for Aragon and it is why the government works closely with educational institutions throughout the region, including the University of Zaragoza.

“We have recently reached an agreement with the University of Zaragoza to increase the number of places in telecommunications and computer science courses, practically doubling the number of places available. We are trying to do the same in the area of vocational training,” reveals de Castro. “Employment programmes are also placing special emphasis on training in these areas to ensure that current and future workers are prepared for the jobs of the future.”

Positioning itself as a leader in innovation and technology, Aragon has been able to build a robust digital infrastructure and a dynamic digital economy. This has made it an even more attractive destination for US companies and investors.

Aragon is heavily investing in broadband infrastructure and 5G networks, ensuring fast and reliable connectivity throughout the region,” says de Castro. “We also have a vibrant technological ecosystem, with numerous innovation centers and technology parks.

Furthermore, Aragon is a leader in the production of renewable energy, including wind and solar power, which offers opportunities for investments in green technologies. There are various tax incentives and support programs for companies that invest in innovation and technological development.

Aragon combines advanced digital infrastructure, a strong commitment to sustainability, government support, a skilled workforce, and a high quality of life, making the region an ideal destination for business and investment.”

Improving connections

Plans are underway to transform the road network and introduce low-carbon transportation solutions

Firmly established as one of the major logistics hubs in Europe, Aragon has had great success in attracting the distribution activities of international companies and is naturally keen to build on this. In order to do so, the government aims to allocate more land for the logistics industry and provide additional support for those that are looking to enter the sector.

“We are currently working on defining a logistics area of more than 430 million square feet for all business activities that aim to establish their logistics operations in our community,” reveals Octavio López, Minister of Development, Housing, Mobility and Logistics. “We are also considering logistics in a broader sense, including logistics for automotive, transportation, train, biohealth, agri-food, energy and data.

“We want to expand the amount of land that is available and improve the conditions for logistics companies that settle in Aragon. That is why we are striving to provide well-trained staff and have significant plans to improve training within universities.

“We also plan to transform 1,242 miles of the road network and improve transportation within our autonomous community by implementing a low-carbon transportation license map. This will help us to better connect our territory.”

Developing low-carbon transportation solutions is a key focus for Aragon, with the transformation of the road network set to cost in the region of \$1 billion. These funds will not only be used to improve the infrastructure but also to purchase vehicles that are better for the environment.

“This significant investment will help us improve the condition of more than 1,242 miles out of 1,677 miles of our total road network. It will also allow us to introduce a new fleet of hybrid and electric buses that will operate on 19 routes throughout Aragon. These will also feature smart bus shelters and a unified fare system to ensure consistent pricing across municipalities,” explains López. “While the funding for these decarbonization actions will come from the European Union, we are also seeking American investors and technology providers who can play a crucial role in these projects by offering innovative solutions and collaborating on sustainable transportation technologies.

“Their involvement can help accelerate the adoption of low-carbon transport solutions and enhance the overall effectiveness of our numerous initiatives.”

In addition to improving the road network throughout the region, the government has also prioritized the housing sector. This is due to the growing number of companies that are setting up operations in Aragon and require a large-scale workforce.

An innovative agriculture sector

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food is working to combat the effects of climate change

Home to a variety of crops, an abundance of livestock and more than 1,000 agri-food companies, it is little surprise that agriculture, livestock and food production is the second-most important economic sector in Aragon.

Generating around 15% of the local GDP and almost 60,000 direct jobs, the gross added value of agriculture and livestock in 2023 was more than \$2.3 billion. This marked a significant improvement of around \$325 from the previous year.

The region has also become a leader in agricultural research and technology thanks to the work of two large institutions: the Agri-Food Institute of Aragon and the Centre for Technological Innovation and Agricultural Research.

Technological innovation in agri-food is particularly important as it helps Aragon to stay ahead of the curve in a crowded market, especially as a number of the products being produced in the region can be found throughout Europe.

“Among the main agricultural products produced in Aragon, drupes — or stone fruits, such as peaches and cherries — lead the pack. In terms of livestock, pork is the undisputed leader, not only in Aragon, but across Spain. Aragon produces more than a quarter of all the pork in the country,” explains Javier Rincón, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food.

JAVIER RINCÓN
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND FOOD

“The local agri-food scene includes other authentic delicacies such as olive oil, ham and truffles.”

“The local agri-food scene includes other authentic delicacies such as olive oil, ham and truffles, which add a touch of class to any kitchen. There are also lesser-known products, such as alfalfa, which is exported as food for animals with unique diets, such as Arabian horses bred in the most prestigious stud farms in the Gulf area.”

While Aragon has enjoyed tremendous success in the agriculture sector, there are numerous challenges that need to be overcome. Some of the most crucial being the ability to deal with complicated regulations and find ways to combat the effects of climate change.

“The reduction of red tape is one of the main



Octavio López
Minister of Development, Housing, Mobility and Logistics

Aragon now plans to build an additional 14,000 new homes across the next decade as it bids to create vibrant communities where employees can live close to their workplaces and put down roots in the region.

“When it comes to housing, we will be looking to receive around \$400 million in public investment and \$400 million in private investment which highlights the strategic positioning of Aragon and the focus of this government,” states López.

OCTAVIO LÓPEZ
MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING, MOBILITY AND LOGISTICS
“We want to expand the amount of land that is available and improve the conditions for companies that settle in Aragon.”

“Public-private collaboration is necessary to undertake significant investment and it will enable us to increase the housing stock and address the imbalance that sees more than half of the population living in Zaragoza. It is also important as it will help keep young people in the region.

“We want young people to be able to have their own place and address the issue in municipalities where work concentration is very high. For example, in the Pyrenees area, ski areas, and high-tourism regions, a lot of staff is needed to support these economic activities. To meet this need, we will build more than 450 houses to ensure there are enough people to support these economic activities.”



Javier Rincón
Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food

goals that this department has set itself,” says Rincón. “Spain belongs to the European Union, something that has allowed us to progress as a country, but which also burdens the economy with excessive and complicated regulation that often hinders agricultural activity.

“As such, we strive to limit bureaucratic hurdles and strengthen the agricultural sector to the best of our abilities.

“At the same time, the success of our agricultural activity depends on access to and the proper use of water resources. Climate change is severely impacting all human activity, including food production, with increasingly frequent and extreme droughts. Therefore, another of our priorities is working to expand and modernize irrigation to ensure the most efficient possible use of water.”

Another major focus for Rincón is breaking into new markets. While Aragon has enjoyed great success in selling its goods throughout Europe, it now wants to break into the sizable American market.

“The US is not even in the top ten importers of Aragonese food but I firmly believe that increasingly close ties between the US and Spain, thanks to the presence of a large and influential Latin community, and especially with Aragon through the football team Real Zaragoza, for example, gives us a great opportunity to promote our food in a country with more than 300 million consumers,” he adds.

“Reaching this potential market must be a priority for the entire agri-food community. I can also assure you that anyone who tries our products will be fully satisfied by their quality and flavor.”

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Pork products are exported to all corners of the world

Bridging the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, Aragon is not just known for its high-quality produce such as extra virgin olive oil, black truffles and ham, but also for its unique wines

Companies looking to invest in Aragon can also be assured of plenty of support thanks to the work being carried out by the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Services of Zaragoza.

"Our network of diversified, small and medium-sized companies is a great strength for us, and is what also makes Aragon very attractive for large companies," states Villarroya. "The government also provides a lot of tax incentives and reductions, financing options and subsidies, especially to sectors such as technology, automotive, logistics and renewable energy."

"We invite American companies to discover the potential of Aragon for their big upcoming investments. We have territory, industrial estates, talent, training and an open government that knows how to do things."



Working towards a sustainable future

One of Europe’s leading exporters of pork, Grupo Jorge prioritizes responsible development

Founded in 1936 by Tomás Samper, a pork livestock trader based in Zaragoza, Grupo Jorge has enjoyed remarkable growth and is now one of the largest exporters of pork in Europe. Having recently expanded operations and created commercial ties with China and Japan, the company exports to more than 100 countries around the world.

“The ability to compete in international markets and deal with the increase in global demand has been made possible thanks to the implementation of several key strategies, including the adoption of advanced technology.

“We have opted to modernize our facilities and implement the latest technologies in production. This has improved operational efficiency and ensures high-quality produce, which is essential to meeting the demands of international markets,” explains Sergio Samper Rivas, CEO of Grupo Jorge.

“Sustainability has also become a key consideration for our consumers so we have focused on sustainable production practices and obtaining certifications that prove out environmental and animal welfare credentials, allowing us to differentiate ourselves in markets that place value on these issues. We also continuously invest in research and development, as we believe it is crucial to innovate practices and products, as well as improve quality and efficiency.”

Always striving to improve its product and implement the latest practices, one of the main focuses of Grupo Jorge is achieving more sustainable and ethical pig farming. To help achieve this, the company has secured a \$43 million loan from the European Investment Bank. “To reach our objectives, we need to implement breeding systems that allow more space and mobility for the animals, reducing confinement and allowing them to live a natural life. We are considering technologies that provide controlled environments to improve the quality of life of the pigs,” outlines Samper. “Our facilities have or will have solar or wind energy to



Sergio Samper Rivas
CEO, Grupo Jorge

cover their energy needs, reducing the dependence on non-renewable sources. At the same time, we are improving the efficiency of the heating, cooling and ventilation systems to reduce energy consumption.”

“Through investment in technology, improved biosecurity and commitment to animal welfare and sustainability, we also aim to position ourselves as a leader in meeting social and environmental expectations. Each step, although challenging, is a step towards more ethical and responsible production.”

These steps could also prove crucial when it comes to expanding operations in North America, particularly in the US where regulations are extremely stringent and high animal welfare standards are demanded. “The US market presents a significant opportunity but requires a well-thought-out and partnership-based strategy,” adds Samper. “Focusing on regulatory compliance, product adaptation, and establishing strategic partnerships are key to a successful and sustainable entry into this competitive market.



High quality products

Diversifying the business

In a move to reduce its dependence on the food industry and mitigate the risks associated with market fluctuations, Grupo Jorge chose to explore new sectors. This led to the creation of Jorge Green, which focuses on finding sustainable agriculture solutions to improve the health of animals and protect the environment, and Jorge Energy, which is committed to exploring different forms of renewable energy.

“Diversification into renewable energy, farming and hardwood plantations strengthens our sustainability standards and our financial resilience,” states Samper. “Furthermore, integrating sustainable practices contributes to our corporate image and helps us meet the expectations of today’s consumers. Our commitment to renewable energy generates additional revenue and optimizes our operations, aligning with the growing demand for sustainable solutions. This long-term vision ensures a solid foundation for the future of our company.”

Despite being a relatively new venture, Jorge Energy has enjoyed a great deal of success. It already operates nine wind farms and 10 photovoltaic plants, and recently sold 703 megawatts of solar projects to Lightsource BP.

“This sale to Lightsource BP aligns with our long-term sustainability goals, allowing us to obtain liquidity from part of our projects to reinvest in renewable initiatives without shouldering all the risk of the investment,” reveals Samper. “Looking ahead, we have exciting plans, such as the gasification of organic waste, which will not only generate methane for internal use, but will also help capture CO2 and reduce our carbon footprint.

“This comprehensive approach, which combines clean energy generation with efficient waste management, reinforces our commitment to sus-

tainability, allowing our company to grow while minimizing environmental fallout.”

Another way that Grupo Jorge is looking towards the future is by implementing a host of social responsibility initiatives. These include a variety of training programs and educational activities. “One of these programs focuses on animal habitat and industry improvements to promote research and the training of qualified professionals. This not only benefits our company but also strengthens the aca-

SERGIO SAMPER RIVAS
CEO, GRUPO JORGE

“We have opted to modernize our facilities and implement the latest technologies in production.”

dem and professional fabric of the region,” details Samper. “The impact of Grupo Jorge’s investments in education is broad, promoting professional development, gender equality and social cohesion across Aragon. These actions benefit the company while also creating a more prosperous and sustainable environment.

“I would also like to express my gratitude to the American investment funds that have supported Grupo Jorge over the long term. Their trust and funding are crucial in a sector that requires significant investments and offers stable returns. The diversification of our funding sources, which includes banks as well as financial and institutional markets, is an important pillar for our growth and sustainability.” www.jorgesel.com



Zuera photovoltaic plant (20 megawatts)

damental to broadening our presence in new markets and ensuring efficient distribution.

“Grupo Jorge is positioning itself to maintain our leading position through innovation, sustainability and adaptation to individual markets. We believe it is vital that the European pork industry continues to invest and collaborate to remain competitive in the long term.”

To deal with the growing demand from nations around the world, Grupo Jorge is also investing in new facilities, including a new feed mill in Zuera which can produce 525,000 tons annually. Another important factor that the company has had to consider is how to appeal to consumers in new markets, such as the US.

Quality produce

Adapting to different markets is hugely important but it is the quality of Aragon’s products that have created the demand. This is particularly true when it comes to pork and it is why Grupo Jorge has enjoyed such success.

Involved in the pork industry since 1940, the company has a deep respect for tradition and artisan production methods and makes full use of its expertise to ensure that all of its products are of the highest possible quality. It is also involved in each and every stage of pork production to make sure that it delivers optimal quality and food safety.

Now Grupo Jorge produces top-quality natural animal feed, rears pigs on its farms, runs four in-house slaughterhouses equipped with the most innovative technology, owns four production plants used for cutting and processing and is even involved in the curing and transformation processes. Thanks to this, they can deliver a wide variety of products including sausages, shoulders and loins, as well as serrano and Iberian ham.

Through every stage of the process, Grupo

A leader in integrating innovation and technology into agri-food processes, it has 65 active members, including food companies, agritech/foodtech companies, technology centers and universities.

The agri-food industry in Aragon is also ably supported by the government through a variety of policies and initiatives, with the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Environment providing financial support for a wide variety of projects in the sector.

This has helped agriculture and livestock farming to account for 5.88% of regional GDP, well above the national average of 2.88%.

A leading player in the agri-food industry

Grupo Costa has enjoyed remarkable growth thanks to a commitment to innovation

Operating in more than 100 countries worldwide and recognized as one of the leading players in Europe’s agri-food industry, Grupo Costa is one of Aragon’s biggest success stories. Founded in 1966 in the city of Huesca, the company was initially dedicated to the buying and selling of grain and, later, of animal feed.

By the late 1970s, the company was growing rapidly and the decision was made to move into pig farming. Livestock integration proved to be an astute move as it allowed the business to expand and by the next decade, Grupo Costa was building and acquiring facilities for the breeding of piglets.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the group had already established itself as the second-largest pork producer in Spain and boasted four feed factories.

The next step for Grupo Costa was to complete the circular process by making several targeted acquisitions. Now Costa Food Group meat-holding comprises the Costa Food Meat, Casademont, Ibéricos Costa, Villar, Aviserrano, Roler, La Alegria and Juan Luna brands. Thanks to all these brands, the entire production process of pork, chicken and turkey is fully supervised from the farm to the table with the inherent premise of all Costa Food products: to be “natural from the origin”.

It also operates 2,000 pig and poultry farms where there is a commitment to the welfare of the livestock. This includes the use of biosecurity measures that can detect potential dangers, whether biological, chemical or physical, to ensure a quality final product. The production cycle of pigs, chickens and turkeys is also monitored closely through the company’s own veterinary services.

This dedication to animal welfare helped Grupo Costa become the first white pork producer in Spain to achieve animal welfare certification from the Spanish Association for Standardization and Certification across all of their farms and throughout the production process.

The cutting and storage rooms make up the next step of the circular process and they are equipped with the latest technology to guarantee food safety. This helps Grupo Costa to produce and export more than 200 million kilos of pork each year to the highest standards. The profits from these sales are then reinvested each year to help the company remain at the forefront of the sector through the modernizing of facilities.

Finally, the products are then adapted to meet the demands of different types of customers, covering everything from artisanal charcuterie and Iberian ham to packaged chicken



Jorge Costa
CEO, Grupo Costa

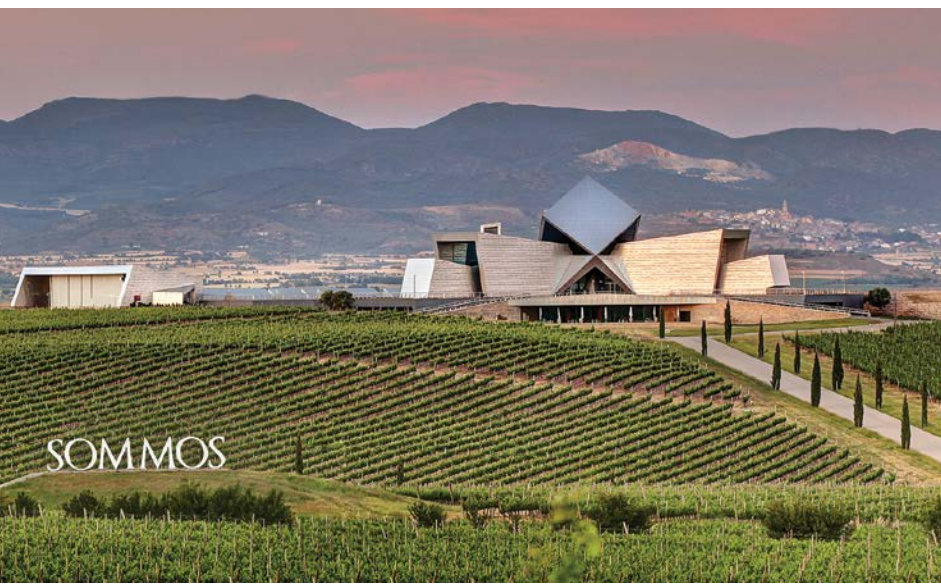
and turkey. By controlling the entire process, from the feed and the raising of livestock to the preparation of products and the packaging, Grupo Costa is able to provide total traceability along the entire value chain, giving it transparency. This has been crucial to the company’s success — including an annual turnover of more than \$2.5 billion — and has helped it to consolidate itself as a benchmark in the European agri-food sector.

This has led to Grupo Costa developing a pioneering farming model that encompasses the most advanced technologies for feeding, animal health and water treatment.

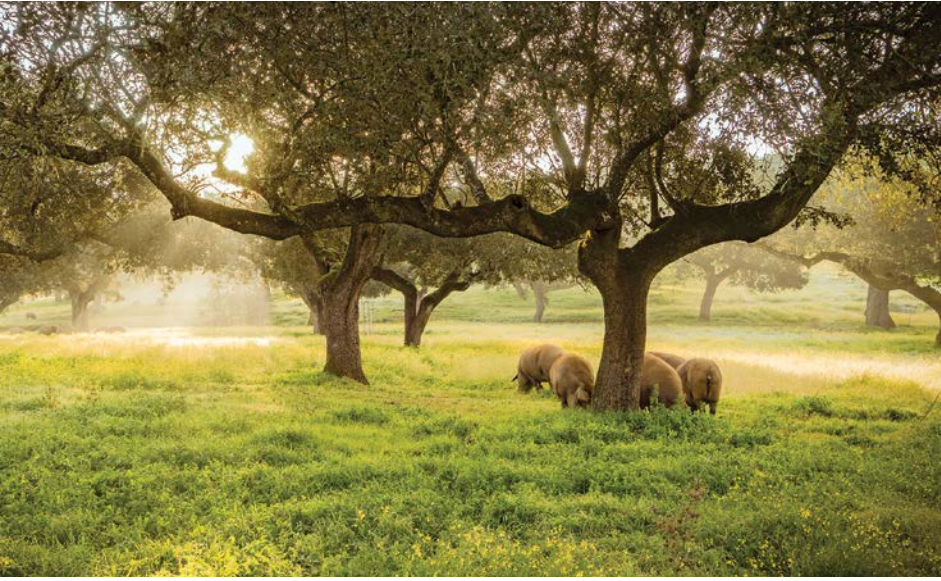
Diversification and innovation

While meat production remains the main activity for Grupo Costa, the company has always been driven by a clear strategy that combines verticalization, internationalization and diversification. This has led the group to achieve a presence in numerous other sectors, including hospitality, renewable energy, real estate, the wine industry, agricultural inputs and the automotive industry.

Within the wine sector, Grupo Costa operates an avant-garde winery at the heart of the Somontano region. Built of steel and glass, the



Bodega Sommos, Grupo Costa



Grupo Costa, commitment to the welfare of livestock

architecture of the Bodega SOMMOS winery is regarded as one of the architectural wonders of the winemaking world, while its moonlight harvesting sees grapes collected when temperatures are at their lowest, thus ensuring that the quality is maintained. Not only does the winery incorporate the latest technology, but it also makes use of gravity-flow winemaking across the whole plot, thanks to its 88-foot gradient. This distinctive process has helped to transform the winery into a must-visit destination.

Another of the driving forces behind the success of Grupo Costa has been its willingness to embrace the latest technology. The company sees innovation as a key part of its DNA and it continually conducts research which is supported by emerging technologies.

This has led to Grupo Costa promoting continuous improvements throughout the entire value chain and constantly improving its processes, products and services with the aim of maintaining high-quality standards across every part of the business.

This can be seen across all areas of the group as innovation has not only been key to optimizing processes, which have mainly relied on tech-

nology and digitalization, but also to improving animal welfare and product control.

While most of the 2,000 pig and poultry farms are located in rural areas, the commitment to modernization has been a constant. This has led to Grupo Costa developing a pioneering farming model that encompasses the most advanced technologies for feeding, animal health and water treatment.

Another major focus of Grupo Costa has been maintaining the values of the family business, which are honesty, passion and effort. These perfectly align with the company’s commitment to sustainability across all areas of the business. Grupo Costa has launched a series of comprehensive projects aimed at improving efficiency and reducing the consumption of natural resources.

In addition to utilizing green energy, another important move is the formation of Glicopepton Biotech, a joint venture which brings the pork and pharmaceutical sectors together for a ground-breaking project. This business collaboration represented the creation of the first structures to supply heparins and other products with high nutritional value across Spain.

Strengthening its presence in Aragon

Grupo Costa plans to expand operations in Aragon through the construction of a large agro-industrial complex

Now firmly established as a leader in the European agribusiness sector, Grupo Costa has maintained its strong ties with Aragon and is set to strengthen its presence in the region after announcing its latest growth and expansion plans.

Grupo Costa recently revealed plans to launch the new Ebro Valley Agri-Food Logistics Centre (CLAVE) in the town of Villamayor, in Zaragoza, to promote a high-tech biotechnology campus and production lines for poultry and pork products, as well as housing a logistics center and the corporate headquarters of a company that was founded in the town of Fraga in Aragon.

Serving as a magnet for new business initiatives in the community, CLAVE will help to strengthen Aragon’s position as an innovative community with the establishment of a Biotechnology Campus focused on the research and development of new products derived from agri-food production.

The campus, characterized by its tech-savviness, will include research and development centers for collaboration with universities and research institutes. Through them, Grupo Costa aspires to create patents and projects that introduce qualitative and quantitative improvements in both the agri-food and bio-pharmaceutical sectors. In addition, it will be based on the principles of the circular economy and the use of by-products generated in the meat production process to generate new products with high added value.

During the construction phase of CLAVE, it is estimated that around 300 jobs will be generated, while once it is operational, 3,200 direct and permanent jobs will be created, in addition to 2,000 indirect jobs.

Of the total investment, which is \$505 million, the majority will be allocated to the promotion of the industrial complex itself, while the remainder will correspond to the urbanization of the complex, which will occupy 383 acres of land and will be located in the south of the municipality of Villamayor.

The construction of CLAVE is set to have a positive impact on the development of the agri-food, biopharmaceutical and logistics sectors in Aragon. While the new infrastructure will lead to the generation of a large number of jobs, it will also create a new business ecosystem of activities related to the agro-industrial sector located in the surrounding municipalities.



Grupo Costa produces a variety of pork products



A thriving food sector that continues to record strong growth

The agri-food industry is a key sector of the economy in Aragon, accounting for more than 10% of the region’s GDP

With a diverse geography and an ancient agricultural tradition, Aragon has long been recognized as an outstanding food producer. Blessed with a wide variety of produce, the region has developed a booming agri-food industry that contributes significantly to the economy.

Home to almost 1,000 agri-food companies, including internationally renowned brands such as Grupo Jorge, the industry has gone from strength to strength in recent years and now accounts for more than 10% of Aragon’s GDP.

The region is a leader in the production of stone fruit and is Spain’s top producer of cherries, accounting for 41% of the country’s total cherry production. The Calanda peach is another gem from Aragon which is exported around the world, while Borage — a herb noted primarily for its sky-blue flowers — is grown throughout the region and has become a favorite among chefs worldwide thanks to the edible leaves being perfect for garnishing drinks and salads.

A rise in pork production

One of the main driving forces behind this significant jump was the growth in pork production as global demand increased. Most recently, China, Japan and Italy have emerged

as the frontrunners in importing Aragonese meat, with pork being the most in demand.

Due to the ever-expanding global market, Aragon’s meat producers and livestock owners have managed to adapt and thrive. This has particularly been the case for Grupo Jorge which is the leading producer and exporter of pork in Spain and exports to more than 100 countries.

SERGIO SAMPER RIVAS
CEO, GRUPO JORGE

“At Grupo Jorge, we have implemented several strategies to maintain or increase our share of the international pork market, especially in the face of growing global demand.”

“At Grupo Jorge, we have implemented several strategies to maintain or increase our share of the international pork market, especially in the face of growing global demand,” reveals Sergio Samper Rivas, CEO of Grupo Jorge.

“The creation of alliances with distributors and other actors in the supply chain, both nationally and internationally, has been fun-



Grupo Jorge, 100% iberian products



Sesé has facilities around the world



Sesé started out as a transport provider

Transforming into a supply chain powerhouse

Starting out as a local transport provider, Sesé is now a global supply chain manager operating in Europe, Africa, Asia and the US

A comprehensive supply chain company that designs and develops sustainable, cutting-edge technological solutions that are efficient and adapted to the needs of its clients, Sesé has undergone remarkable growth since being founded by Alfonso Sesé Tena in 1965.

Starting out in Teruel, the company was originally dedicated to the purchase, sale and transport of agricultural products. Three decades later, the family business was expanded when Alfonso and Ana Sesé decided to build on their father's achievements. With a clear objective to grow and diversify, a series of bold decisions led to the opening of international offices and the diversification of the business beyond land transport. This led to logistics and industrial services being incorporated into the company's range of solutions.

Now Sesé operates in 20 countries in Europe as well as in the US, Africa and Asia, employing a team of more than 13,000 professionals across its different business divisions which is divided into transport (land, air, sea and vehicle transport); logistics; industrial services and distribution.

Still with strong roots in Aragon, including headquarters in Zaragoza, the company is now embarking on a mission to transform the supply chain model through technological innovation.

"Sesé's business nowadays is that of a comprehensive and global supply chain manager. This is the core of its activity. What does this mean? It means that our purpose as a company and as a team is to manage every aspect of the supply chain. From the moment you place an order until they are delivered to your home, we oversee the entire process," explains Alfonso Sesé. "This includes sourcing all necessary components, whether steel, plastic, or otherwise; manufacturing those components; managing supply quality; coordinating shipment to the appropriate distribution center; delivering products to the dealer; and finally, ensuring they reach the customer."

ALFONSO SESÉ
PRESIDENT, SESÉ

"Our goal is to make the supply chain as direct as possible, minimizing resources and time. We also employ the best technologies to optimize and streamline the process."

"How do we do this? We focus on achieving maximum efficiency. Our goal is to make the supply chain as direct as possible, minimizing resources and time. We also employ the best technologies to optimize and streamline the process, ensuring every step is faster and more efficient. This includes using advanced, automated machinery, green supply systems and optimized transport options, whether by ship, plane, train, or truck, utilizing the most suitable fuels and methods."

Sesé is also seen as a leading light in the business world when it comes to sustainability, receiving numerous awards in recognition of its commitment to the global decarbonisation of the supply chain, including the Alcance 3.0 prize for the best collaboration and strategic alliance in sustainability at the CPOnet Group awards.

"When it comes to sustainability, the first



Alfonso Sesé
President, Sesé

step is people. We can focus on fuels or technologies but the real emphasis must be on individuals. Addressing the negative impact of our actions requires a shift in mindset and culture. Sustainability isn't just about obvious things like airplanes, combustion cars, or scooters," outlines Sesé.

"We need to think differently about consumption. For example, if I need something, it's better to source it from a yard away rather than three yards. And if it can be delivered directly, without unnecessary detours, all the better. Packaging made from recyclable materials is another important step. This attitude toward minimizing impact is fundamental, and that's why people are central to this effort. This is who we are and what we strive to do."

"Globalization is also crucial. For a business to be truly sustainable, it must be economically sustainable. Diversification and interconnected systems play a critical role in this. Ultimately, it's not just about understanding these principles but putting them into action." Thanks to this strong understanding of what it takes for a business to be truly sustainable, Sesé has introduced numerous important measures including the adoption of green energy and the utilization of the latest technology.

"Some of our initiatives include the adoption of green energy across all our facilities and for all our operations, including forklifts, AGVs, and so on," says Sesé. "Our fleet of vehicles, across all types, is made up of the latest generation models with three-year renewal cycles. I believe there is no other fleet in Europe that renews as frequently as we do."

"Additionally, the foundation we have established has a single goal: the integration of people with different abilities into the work environment. All of these efforts align with our broader objectives, and they are initiatives we are proud to have implemented."

"Our commitment to technology, particularly in process engineering, has been key to driving sustainability. We focus on making our processes as efficient as possible by introducing technology that enhances performance and ensures maximum efficiency. This commitment to technology has been one of our most important initiatives, and this year, it has been further strengthened and reinforced."

A truly international company

Firmly established as a prominent global player, Sesé achieved remarkable results in 2023, with operating profit growing by 70% compared to 2022 as it reached \$66 million. Turnover also increased to more than \$1,096 million, a 14%



Sesé provides international air transport solutions

increase on the previous year.

This positive performance was particularly led by the automotive module assembly division, especially in the US, where the consolidation of its axle assembly activity for electric and combustion vehicles was a key driver behind the achievement of these results.

The start-up of new international transport businesses, as well as continued growth in markets such as Mexico and Brazil, also made a fundamental contribution to the results obtained, with international activity now accounting for 40% of the company's global turnover.

ALFONSO SESÉ
PRESIDENT, SESÉ

"We are a long-term company. We don't operate with a short-term mindset. We are a company in continuous development, always evolving."

"Internationalization has a positive impact on business stabilization, particularly for the future. Every step in expanding internationally involves navigating new projects, different cultures, unique ways of operating, and unfamiliar stakeholders. For instance, as someone from Spain, specifically Teruel, I naturally think differently than someone from the United States. This difference in mindset is innate," describes Sesé.

"That said, it's essential to approach these challenges with an open mind, understanding how people in the target market think and operate. Ideally, you would have a local representative in the United States to manage the project. For example, you could take someone local, work closely with them for a year to ensure they understand your company and its values, and then, once they're familiar with your approach, they can adapt and implement the plan in a way that aligns with the local context. That's what success is."

Given the success of the company, it is little surprise that Sesé has become an attractive option for investors seeking a logistics and supply chain partner.

"If I had to highlight the most positive and attractive qualities about ourselves, I would say that we are normal people, but above all, we are deeply committed."

"We are also highly knowledgeable about our business and what sets us apart is our genuine interest in and deep understanding of our field," says Sesé.

"What distinguishes us further is our commitment to society and, most importantly, to people. We are forward-thinking and dedicated to people. Additionally, we are a very sensitive company, particularly when it comes to society, people, and minimizing negative impact."

"I believe there's an important aspect which is implied by our commitment, but it's worth specifying: we are a long-term company. We don't operate with a short-term mindset. We are a company in continuous development, always evolving toward a model that works. While we are not overly focused on short-term profitability, we believe in creating value in the medium term and achieving long-term profitability once we've reached the most efficient model."

While Sesé has transformed into a global powerhouse, the company remains committed to Aragon and recently became the first in the field of supply chain, logistics and transportation to partner with the Aragon Automotive and Mobility Cluster, thus joining an ecosystem of companies and organizations that work every day to build a more sustainable and connected future.

Explaining why Aragon has become home to so many successful companies, Sesé adds: "The region benefits from a government that is highly supportive of its development, with a strong executive approach. Both previous and current administrations have shown a clear commitment to developing Aragon, with a focus on strengthening the backbone of the economy. This determination is becoming more evident every day, which gives investors considerable confidence."

"Specific elements that make it stand out include its natural wealth, its territory has everything: water, tourism, mountains and vast expanses suitable for renewable energy projects. It also has a well-educated society with top-tier universities that offer high-quality training, placing it on par with the best universities in Europe. The people are calm, committed, and focused on the long term, which is a key trait. However, there is a tendency to underestimate ourselves."

"The history of Aragon shows that we are stable and peaceful. It's true that things may not always be fast-paced in Aragon, but we are respectful and steady."



Sesé provides efficient solutions for the supply chain

SESÉ AT A GLANCE

Sesé is the ally to companies looking for **comprehensive, digital, sustainable, innovative** and **efficient solutions** for their supply chain. Your project is our project. We are **firmly committed** to helping you find **the best solution for your supply chain**. And if it does not exist, we will create it.


+13,000
Committed people


8
Production and assembly sites


1,040
Million Euros turnover in 2023


77
Logistic and distribution centers


20
Countries where we are active


+3,000
Vehicles