

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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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





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 Alcan 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