

Barcelona to become the world seed capital in May

The World Seed Congress will bring together 2,000 specialists and 200 companies from 60 countries

- **The International Seed Federation (ISF) has chosen Spain and Barcelona to hold its annual World Seed Congress, bringing back international face-to-face meetings after the pandemic.**
- **Important discussions will take place to address the continuity of seed supply in war/conflict zones, in light of the current war in Ukraine.**
- **The event offers both possibilities of in-person attendance and online participation through the "Channel World Seed" platform.**
- **The seed sector actively contributes to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on agricultural sustainability and plant breeding based on scientific research.**

Nyon, 29 March 2022 - The International Seed Federation (ISF) has chosen Spain to host the World Seed Congress 2022. Organized annually, the congress will take place this year in the city of Barcelona from May 16 to 18, co-organized with the Spanish seed associations ANOVE and APROSE. This event brings back the most important gathering of the global seed sector to its face-to-face format, after having been postponed two years ago due to the pandemic.

This 73rd edition will be attended by an estimated total of 2,000 professionals from 200 companies in 60 countries: aside from organizing the in-person congress at the Fira Barcelona Gran Vía, which will be attended by around 1,000 business leaders, representatives of public institutions, and NGOs, an additional 1,000 others are expected to participate through the online platform "Channel World Seed".

A critical agricultural input

In light of the ongoing war in Ukraine, a panel discussion will take place on the critical need to continue the supply of seeds to conflict zones. ISF recently released a [statement](#) on the issue, calling on the international community to enable green lanes for agricultural inputs.

Alluding to the Congress theme - "Sowing a vibrant future" - ISF General Secretary Michael Keller said, "The theme of the congress takes on a whole new meaning today, as we are

faced with the unimaginable war in Ukraine. Seed is the starting point of the food chain – and only through peace and cooperation can we make quality seed accessible to all and ensure food security everywhere."

The program of the Congress will also include specialized panel discussions on the most important topics related to the seed sector: innovation and scientific research in plant breeding, their contribution to the food value chain, intellectual property, the fight against illegal practices, climate change and seed resilience, phytosanitary measures, and the contribution of seeds to sustainable agriculture.

"Meeting in person again after two years, we have a unique opportunity to review the international seed trade situation and glean valuable lessons from our experience with Covid to further strive for consistent regulations in a world where seed interdependence is a reality," said Keller.

A highly innovative and dynamic sector

The Congress also reserves a large space for commercial exchanges, with trading tables and exhibitions.

In the European Union, the breeding sector has a turnover of around 7 billion euros and employs approximately 50,000 people, a quarter of them dedicated specifically to research. On the average, the sector reinvests up to 30% of its profit to research and development, enabling the cycle of innovation and the development of new crop varieties. For its part, the Spanish seed market, which in 2020 reached a turnover of approximately 750 million euros, is the third largest in Europe and the thirteenth worldwide.

Highlights of the main sessions and other content of the Congress will be broadcast online through "Channel World Seed", which, according to ISF estimates, will enable around 1,000 participants to follow discussions remotely. Speakers will analyze the most significant conclusions of the different panels, while several companies will raise awareness of the latest innovations in the sector, their priorities, and ambitions.

According to Keller, "ISF sees this Congress as a decisive step to further align the seed sector to food systems and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals that the UN has proposed to all humanity as key challenges".

Moreover, ISF's Secretary General reiterated ISF's vision: "we believe in a world where everyone can access the best quality seeds possible. In this sense, given the global challenges facing the world food supply, our Barcelona Congress will reaffirm the need for global seed movement, claiming, once again, the important role of plant breeding and seed innovation".

According to a 2021 report, in the EU alone and over the last 20 years, 67% of annual productivity growth has been due to improvements brought about by plant and seed breeding¹.

For his part, Antonio Villarroel, General Manager of ANOVE, the association that brings together most of the companies and plant research centers in Spain, explained that "agriculture faces the huge challenge of sustainably producing quality food for an ever-growing world population. We will only achieve this if we all - not only the breeding companies - continue to make a firm commitment to innovation; this is the only way to be competitive and to provide real value to both the farmer and the whole chain, to satisfy the increasingly demanding end consumers".

ANOVE, together with APROSE, the Professional Association of Selected Seed Producers, have collaborated to organize the World Seed Congress. Together, they bring together more than a hundred Spanish companies involved in breeding and seed production, with a common mission to raise awareness of the central role of the seed industry and to support innovation and development in agriculture. ##



About ISF (<https://worldseed.org/>)

ISF is the voice of the global seed industry. It represents the interests of its members since 1924 and today accounts for 96% of the international seed trade. With a global reach extending to members worldwide and official observer status in intergovernmental and international organizations, ISF is uniquely positioned to contribute to the development of government policy and trade strategy.

About ANOVE (www.anove.es)

The National Association of Plant Breeders (ANOVE) is the association that brings together companies and public centres dedicated to the generation of added value in the agri-food sector through research, development and the use of new plant varieties.

Its mission is to represent the plant breeding sector in Spain, promoting the defence of its interests and the knowledge of its activity, supporting innovation and the development of agriculture. ANOVE works for an innovative, competitive and sustainable agriculture, which values and has full access to plant breeding, thus contributing to food security and the economic development of society.

ANOVE is currently made up of 59 organisations and is structured into four areas of activity: cereals; horticultural and ornamental crops; fruit and berry crops; maize, oilseeds and industrial crops. This allows the discussion of specific problems of each type of crop and the definition of strategies.

About Aprose (<http://www.aprose.es>)

¹ Noleppa, Steffen y Carlsburg, Matti: *The socio-economic and environmental values of plant breeding in the EU*, HFFA Research GmbH, Berlin, 2021.

Aprose is the Professional Association of Selected Seed Producing Companies. Created in 1951 as a non-profit association, it brings together 48 seed producing companies that are grouped into 5 different groups: Industrial crop seeds; cereal, maize and sorghum seeds; legume, fodder plant and grass seeds; fruit trees, nurseries and breeders; and vegetable seeds. Its objectives are to disseminate the benefits of certified seed and promote its use, as well as to represent its members in different organisations and defend their common interests. It mediates and collaborates with institutions at national, international and regional level.

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