

Guide to entrepreneurship and investment in Barcelona

Discover the role of the City
of Barcelona in promoting
high-growth companies



Barcelona



At **BBVA Spark** we are committed to accompanying entrepreneurs and strategic investors on their path to success. Supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem not only drives new

ideas, but also stimulates productivity from entrepreneurship hubs like **Barcelona**, which helps to reinforce Spain's position as a **global technology center**.

BBVA Spark Team

Índice.

01



Overview of the current **entrepreneurial ecosystem** in Barcelona

02



Key players in the ecosystem

03



Journey to the past: a brief history of entrepreneurship in Barcelona

01

Overview of the current entrepreneurial ecosystem in Barcelona.

Resilience and leadership
in the European
startup ecosystem.

Regional leadership and nearly 2,500 startups.



2.495
startups & 'scaleups'



36.75 B€*
Ecosystem value

*B€: Billion euros



2 in Spain

8 in Europe



1 in Spain

15 in Europe

Fuente: [Top 30 European cities in Dealroom's analysis of entrepreneurial ecosystems.](#) Dealroom.

Investment resilience.

- **Catalonia** is the region in Spain that has received the most VC investment in the last 5 years: **more than 5 billion euros.**
- **Barcelona** was the **2nd city in Spain in attracting VC investment in 2023** and the first in investment volume per capita.
- Although investment has decreased compared to the €1.2 billion recorded in **2021-2022**, it exceeds pre-pandemic levels.
- The average ticket size is lower, but the number of funding rounds remains resilient.

Investment volume and number of rounds in Barcelona.



Fuente: [ONE Platform](#). Oficina Nacional de Emprendimiento based on data from Dealroom (consulted on 9 Sep. 2024) and [Spain ecosystem report 2023](#). Dealroom

Leadership of health-related companies.

5 main sectors of Barcelona startups by number:



Health technologies (healthtech)



Business services and software



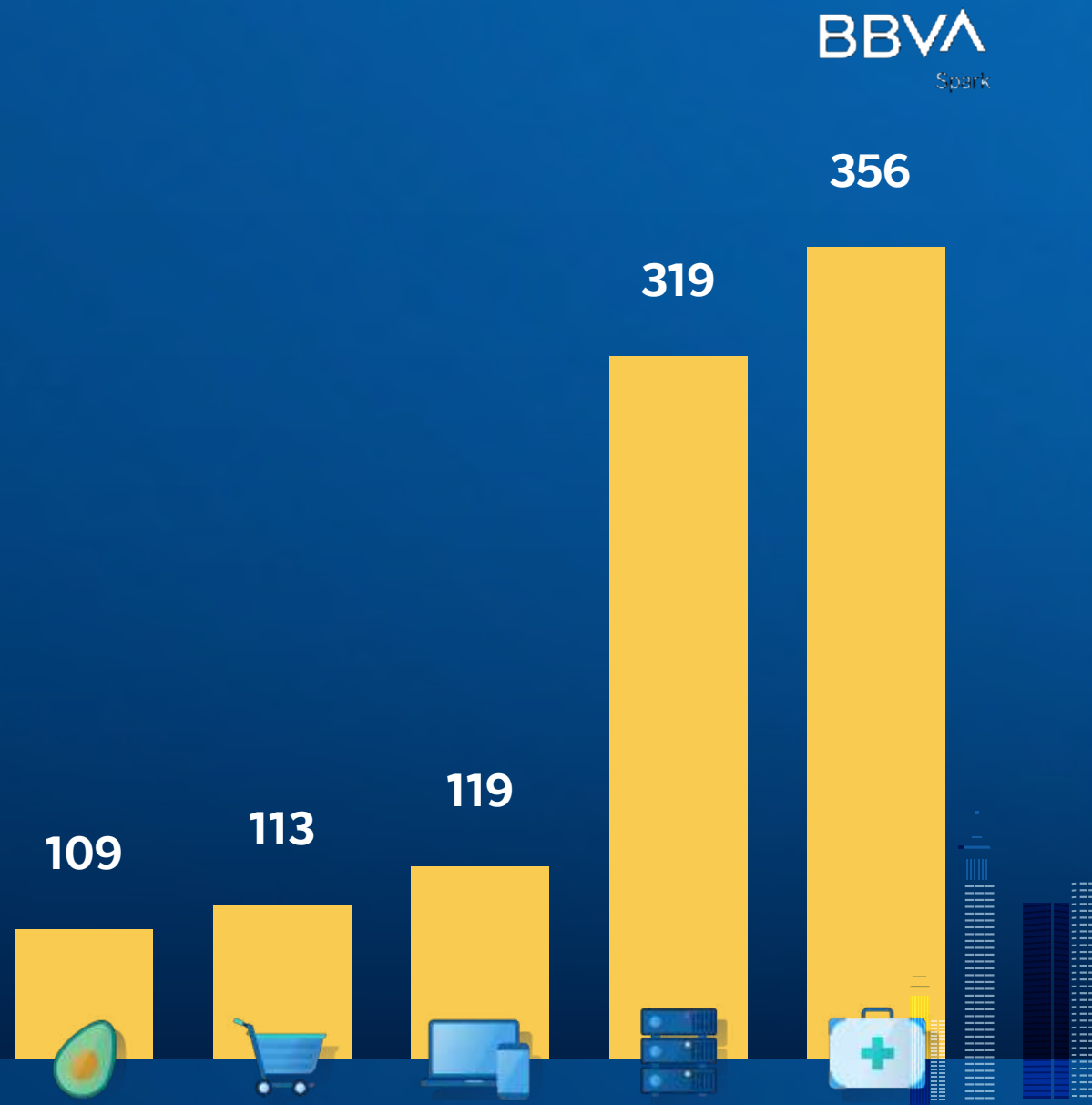
Information technologies and mobile telephony



E-commerce



Food



Fuente: [Spain ecosystem report 2023](#). Dealroom.

An attractive city for startup founders.



Most attractive cities for building a startup in the European Union.

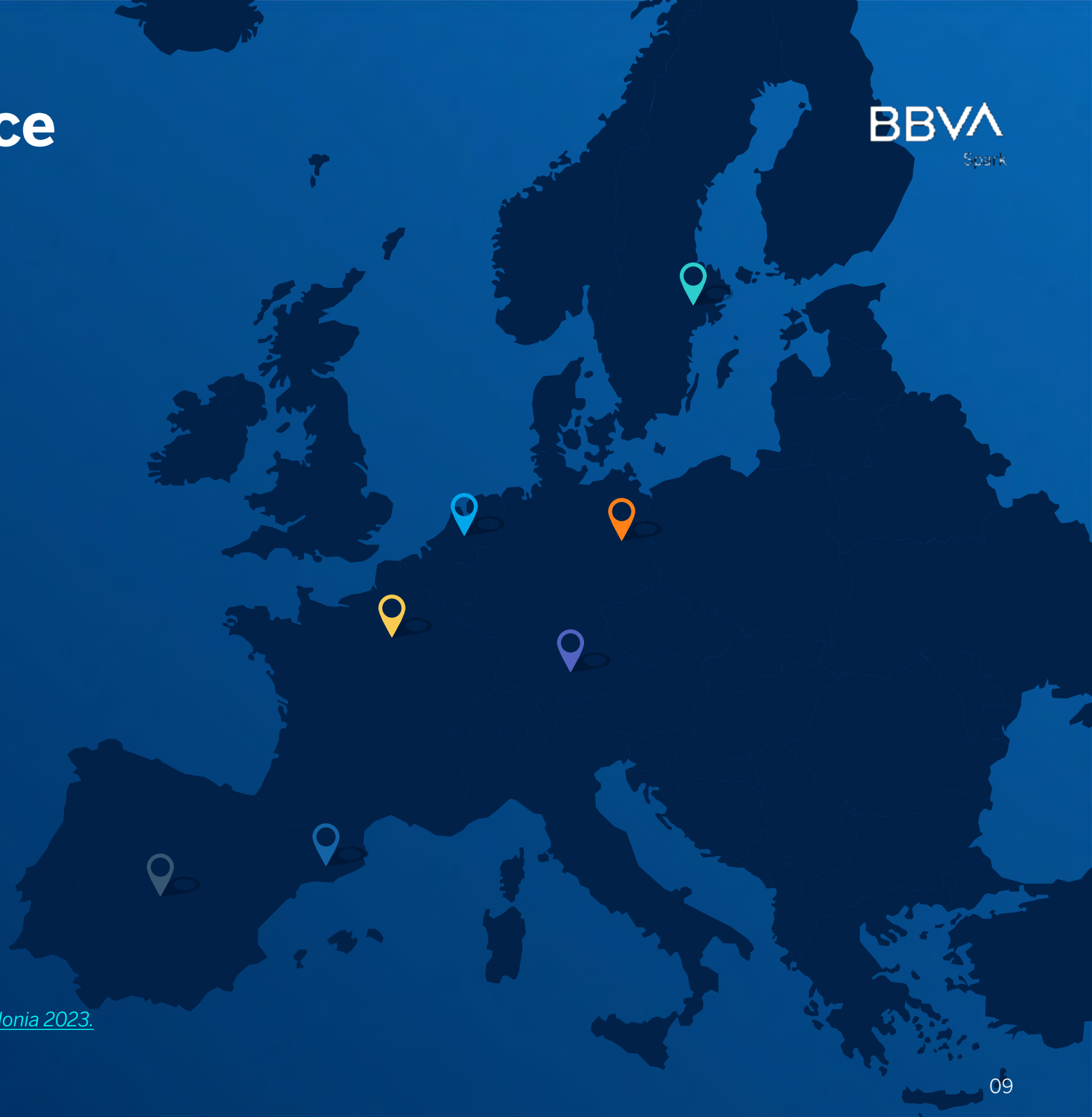


Fuente: [Analysis of the startup ecosystem in Catalonia 2023.](#)

Strong presence of scaleups.

Ranking of EU cities by number of scaleups

- 01 **Paris:** 1.217
- 02 **Berlin:** 704
- 03 **Stockholm:** 445
- 04 **Amsterdam:** 313
- 05 **Barcelona:** 283
- 06 **Munich:** 268
- 07 **Madrid:** 248



Fuente: [Analysis of the startup ecosystem in Catalonia 2023.](#)

02

Key players in the Barcelona ecosystem.

5 unicorns, numerous scaleups and a robust network of universities and research and business centres.

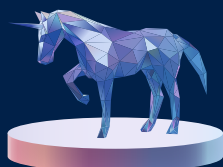
Notable tech companies.

Unicorns



- 14 unicorns in Spain
- 5 unicorns in Barcelona

- > **Edreams** | Traveltech
- > **Glovo** | Delivery
- > **Wallbox** | Cleantech | Mobility
- > **Travelperk** | Traveltech
- > **Factorial** | HRTech



Promising scaleups

- > **Amenitiz** | Hospitality Tech
- > **Cafler** | Mobility
- > **Exoticca** | Travel
- > **Freshly** | Cosmetics
- > **Heura Foods** | Foodtech
- > **Holaluz** | Cleantech
- > **Housfy** | Proptech
- > **Innovamat** | Education
- > **Last.app** | Hospitality Tech
- > **Mundimoto** | Mobility
- > **Olistic** | Healthtech
- > **Paack** | Delivery
- > **Payflow** | Fintech
- > **Qida** | Healthtech
- > **Red Points** | Cibersecurity
- > **Sequra** | E-commerce
- > **Submer** | Deeptech
- > **Sunhero** | Cleantech
- > **Yaba** | Comercio electrónico
- > **Wallapop** | E-commerce
- > **Worldsensing** | IoT

Support spaces for startups.

Incubators and accelerators

- > BCN Health Booster
- > Conector
- > SeedRocket
- > Tech Barcelona (Pier 01)
- > The Collider

Universities

- > Universitat de Barcelona
- > Universitat Pompeu Fabra
- > Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
- > Universitat Ramon Llull

Co-working spaces

- > Impact Hub
- > Loom
- > Regus
- > Sit&Plug
- > WeWork

Business schools

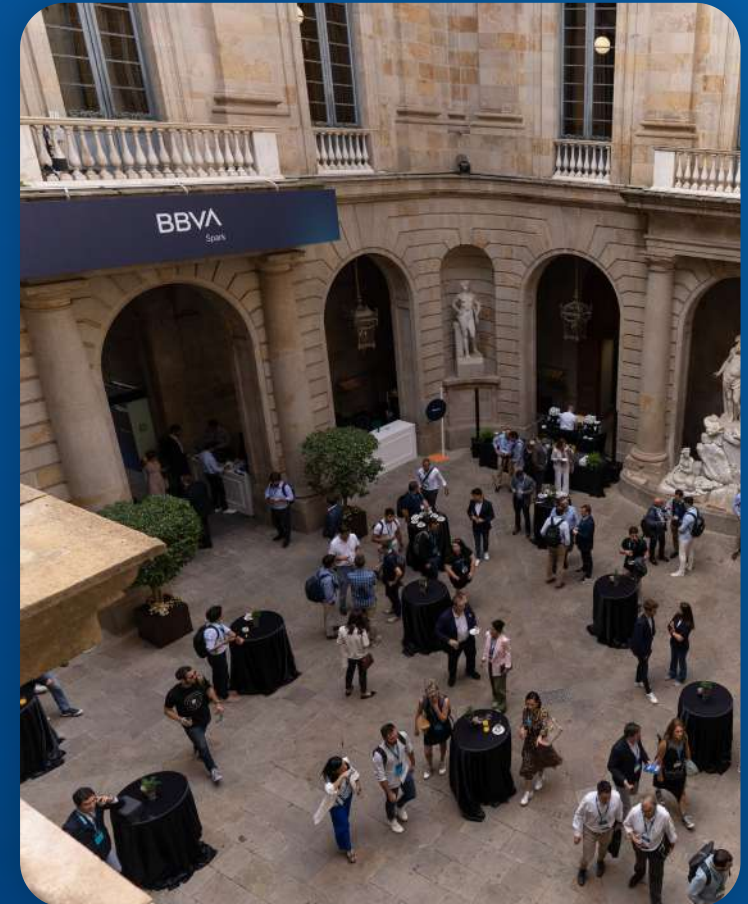
- > BSE
- > EAE
- > Esade
- > IESE

Research centres

- > Barcelona Supercomputing Center
- > Hospital Sant Pau (Recinto Modernista)
- > I2Cat
- > ICREA
- > Idibaps
- > VHIO

Main VC funds.

- 4founders
- Active Venture Partners
- Adara Ventures
- Antai Ventures
- Breega
- Elaia
- Encomenda
- Extension Fund
- Inveready
- Nauta Capital
- Nina Capital
- Plus Partners
- Seven Roots VC
- Yellow VC
- Wayra Barcelona
- Zubi Labs



Public subsidies.



Barcelona City Council

It offers multiple programmes to support entrepreneurship, including financing and training.

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Regional Government of Catalonia

Initiatives such as ACCIÓ provide resources for the internationalisation and growth of technology companies.

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Catalan Finance Institute

It offers financing to companies and entities to promote growth and innovation in the Catalan economy.

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Government of Spain

National innovation support programmes, such as the Innovation Guarantee Fund (ICEX), are also available to entrepreneurs in Barcelona.

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Eventos tecnológicos.

01 Mobile World Congress

The world's leading event for the mobile technology industry, held annually in Barcelona.



02 4YFN

Annual event focused on startups, organised by Mobile World Capital Barcelona, which connects entrepreneurs with investors.

03 BBVA Spark Summit

The event where BBVA Spark brings together CEOs and founders of technology companies, investors and leaders of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

04 Tech Spirit Barcelona

Annual event that showcases the key players in the city's technology scene.

Entrepreneurship Map of Barcelona.

- 01 22@
- 02 Free Trade Zone
- 03 Factorial – RR.HH.
- 04 Travelperk - Travel
- 05 Glovo - Delivery
- 06 Wallbox - Cleantech



Barcelona, one of Europe's main entrepreneurship hubs.



± **2,500**

startups and a growing number of scaleups



A benchmark in key sectors such as healthcare technologies and enterprise software



One of the most attractive destinations for founders of tech companies



Institutional support and international events



In short, a vibrant centre for entrepreneurship and business development that you are already a part of.

Welcome!

BBVA Spark Team

03

Journey to the past: a brief history of entrepreneurship in Barcelona.

From medieval guilds to
technology hubs: the
evolution of innovation
in the city.

Before the 19th century.



The guilds, forerunners of innovation

From the Middle Ages onwards, Barcelona stood out for its guild activity.

Guilds:

- Artisans and merchants grouped by trade.
- Product quality regulation.
- Training of workers and professional categories: apprentice, technician and master.

Numerous streets still bear the name of a guild:

- Carrer dels Cotoners (Cotton Merchants)
- Carrer dels Formatgers (Cheesemakers)
- Carrer dels Argenters (Silversmiths)
- Carrer dels Curtidors (Tanners)

During the 17th and 18th centuries, workshops were established in the Raval area, the seed for future factories.



Creation of guilds in Barcelona

- Shoemakers' Guild (13th century)
- Brotherhood of Tanners (13th century)
- Guild of Glassmakers and Rush Weavers (15th century)
- Coppersmiths' Guild (16th century)
- Resellers' Guild (17th century)
- Guild of Veil Weavers (18th century)

19th Century | The industrial revolution and the birth of modern entrepreneurship.



Around 1830, the **Industrial Revolution** reached Spain through Barcelona with factories that applied the steam engine power to the textile industry.



The role of entrepreneurial families such as the **Güell** and **Batlló** is particularly notable.



Universal Exposition of 1888: Barcelona was positioned as a centre of innovation and commerce.

• Main factories that opened in Barcelona in the 19th century

• Bonaplata (1832)

• Vapor Güell (1846)

• España Industrial (1851)

• Can Batlló (1878)

First decades of the 20th century | Consolidation and technological advances.



Strengthening of **family businesses** in key sectors.



International Exposition of 1929: exhibition of technological advances and consolidation of the city.

Main factories that opened in Barcelona at the beginning of the 20th century

Fabra i Coats (1903)

Hispano-Suiza (1904)

Ebro (1911)

La Canadiense (1919)

Hispano Olivetti (1929)

1940-1990 | Automotive and industrial restructuring.



Despite the scarcity of raw materials, the **industrial fabric** recovered in the 1950s.



Barcelona attracted new industries, especially **automotive**, and became one of the main hubs in southern Europe.



The oil crisis of the 1970s reduced the number of factories. This trend was reinforced in the 1980s with **industrial restructuring**.

Main factories that opened in Barcelona during the second half of the 20th century

Pegasus
(1946)

SEAT
(1950)

Henkel
(1964)

1990-2024: Urban transformation and investment attraction.



1992 Olympic Games: A catalyst for urban transformation and economic revitalisation.



Increased **international investment**, especially **in infrastructure and technology**.



Creation of innovation centres and hubs by repurposing vacant industrial heritage.



District 22@

With public and private support, 200 hectares of former industrial land in Poblenou have been transformed into an innovation area featuring co-workings such as Wojo, technology companies such as Adamo Telecom and research centres, such as the Institut TIC de Barcelona, among others.



Fuentes.

- ***Analysis of the startup ecosystem in Catalonia 2023.*** Acció – Generalitat de Catalunya
- ***Startups.one.gob.es. Oficina Nacional de Emprendimiento.*** Base de datos consultada el 10/09/2024.
- ***Spain ecosystem report 2023.*** Dealroom
- ***App.dealroom.co.*** Base de datos de Dealroom consultada el 10/09/2024.
- ***The Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2023.*** Startup Genome
- ***Startup Heatmap Europe 2023.*** Marq
- ***The Startup Ecosystem of Barcelona.*** StartupBlink
- ***GPA Innova.*** GPA Innova
- ***Els gremis a la Barcelona medieval.*** Xarxa Telemàtica Educativa de Catalunya
- ***Los gremios, las poderosas corporaciones que forjaron la Edad Media y el renacimiento.*** National Geographic

