

BIOSPAIN 2026 kicks off in Bilbao, placing the city at the heart of European biotechnology and its major strategic debates

- The Bilbao Exhibition Centre (BEC) will host BIOSPAIN 2026 from 29 September to 1 October, organised by AseBio in collaboration with the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, the Basque Government and the Basque Health Cluster.
- The opening ceremony was attended by AseBio President Cristina Nadal; Ainara Basurko, Provincial Councillor for Economic Promotion at the Provincial Council of Bizkaia; Jaione Ganzarain, Deputy Minister for Technology, Innovation and Digital Transformation of the Basque Government; and Juan Cruz Cigudosa, Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Universities.
- Ten years after it was last held in the Basque Country, BIOSPAIN returns to one of Spain's most established life sciences and healthcare ecosystems, with a growing European profile.
- The United Kingdom will be the Guest Nation at BIOSPAIN 2026, strengthening the international dimension of the event and the links between two of Europe's most dynamic biotechnology ecosystems.

Bilbao, 29 September 2026. ^ The [BIOSPAIN 2026](#) International Biotechnology Meeting, taking place from **29 September to 1 October** at the **Bilbao Exhibition Centre (BEC)**, is organised by the [Spanish Bioindustry Association \(AseBio\)](#), in collaboration with the [Provincial Council of Bizkaia](#), the [Basque Government](#) and the [Basque Health Cluster](#). The event brings together biotechnology companies and institutions, regulatory agencies and leading national and international investors with the aim of strengthening the role of the biotech industry as a **strategic sector** for the **competitiveness and autonomy of Spain and Europe**, while highlighting its capacity to provide solutions in key areas such as health, food, the bioeconomy and the green industrial transition.

The event was officially opened today by AseBio President **Cristina Nadal**; **Ainara Basurko**, Provincial Councillor for Economic Promotion at the Provincial Council of Bizkaia; **Jaione Ganzarain**, Deputy Minister for Technology, Innovation and Digital Transformation of the Basque Government; and **Juan Cruz Cigudosa**, Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Universities. They were joined at the events following the opening ceremony by **Ceri Morgan**, His Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Europe, representing the **United Kingdom as BIOSPAIN 2026 Guest Nation**.

According to **Cristina Nadal**, "Biotechnology is one of the fields that will define Europe's competitiveness, security and prosperity over the coming decades. We have world-class science, talent and an increasingly robust business ecosystem, but we now need to create the conditions to ensure that innovation is not only generated in Europe, but can

also grow and develop here. BIOSPAIN 2026 aims to contribute to this debate and accelerate the connections that will make this transformation possible.

"BIOSPAIN is much more than a congress. It is the meeting point for an ecosystem that brings together science, innovation, investment, business and talent to transform knowledge into economic and social impact. From the Basque Country, one of Europe's most dynamic regions in innovation and biosciences, BIOSPAIN will connect the sector's leading players to foster collaboration, generate new opportunities and turn talent and scientific excellence into real impact for society," said Cristina Nadal.

Juan Cruz Cigudosa, Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Universities, highlighted that "biotechnology is a strategic technology of the present. Increasingly, it is also a technology linked to economic competitiveness, strategic autonomy and countries' industrial capabilities."

"Spain is better prepared than ever to play a leading role internationally. We have moved from an emerging ecosystem to an increasingly consolidated one, capable of combining talent, knowledge, infrastructure, funding and international ambition. This evolution comes at a decisive moment for Europe, which recognises in its strategic agenda that life sciences and biotechnology will be among the drivers of competitiveness, sustainability and strategic autonomy over the coming decades," Cigudosa said.

Ceri Morgan, His Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Europe, commented: "The UK biopharmaceutical sector is one of the most advanced and innovative in the world. Although it represents 41% of the companies in our life sciences sector, it generates 65% of its total turnover, reflecting the enormous value and innovative capacity of our biopharmaceutical companies. **BIOSPAIN 2026 offers us a fantastic opportunity to showcase this strength as Guest Nation.** We have some of the best universities and research centres in the world, as well as companies developing cutting-edge solutions in areas such as drug discovery, biotechnology and sustainable pharmaceutical manufacturing. **The UK and Spanish ecosystems are closely interconnected, and BIOSPAIN is the perfect platform to drive transformative innovations together with our Spanish partners.**"

The Basque Country, a leading life sciences ecosystem

Ten years after it was last held in the Basque Country, **BIOSPAIN returns to one of Spain's most established life sciences and healthcare ecosystems, with a growing European profile.** The region is home to more than 300 companies, 20 research centres, four universities and leading hospitals, forming an ecosystem that generates more than €9.4 billion and supports 62,000 jobs.

This is the result of a sustained commitment over time by the Basque public administrations, together with public-private and inter-institutional collaboration. Broad frameworks such as the Basque Country Industry Plan 2030 and the Science, Technology and Innovation Plan 2030 (PCTI 2030) are complemented by the strategies of the Provincial Councils of Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa, which support biosciences

and deep tech through specific instruments and local capacity aimed at accelerating the development of strategic science- and technology-based sectors.

Within this ecosystem, Bizkaia plays a particularly important role, accounting for 45% of companies, 44% of employment and 56% of sector revenues in the Basque Country, with notable capabilities in areas such as biomanufacturing and advanced therapies. Hosting BIOSPAIN in Bilbao represents an opportunity to reinforce this position and connect the region's scientific and business capabilities with national and international companies, investors and institutions.

Ainara Basurko, **Provincial Councillor for Economic Promotion at the Provincial Council of Bizkaia**, stressed that "the fact that BIOSPAIN is being held in Bizkaia today has a great deal to do with the ecosystem we have built over the years. In **Bizkaia, this sector comprises more than 135 companies, generates more than 27,000 jobs and exceeds €5.2 billion in revenues**. We share a strategic commitment across the entire region and have the capacity to support the journey from science to market and from knowledge to business."

"Behind these projects is a **strong and interconnected ecosystem**: technology and research centres, universities, companies, the healthcare system and public institutions working in coordination. **At the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, we help create the conditions for these projects to emerge, grow and compete through grants, specialised services, support, financing and strategic projects,**" she added.

Jaione Ganzarain, Deputy Minister for Technology, Innovation and Digital Transformation of the Basque Government, **highlighted the strength of the Basque bioscience and healthcare industry and its priority, strategic and driving role within the Basque Country Industry Plan 2030**. In this context, she pointed to the Transformative Projects as one of the Plan's key tools: "a new instrument in our policy aimed at strengthening the industry of the future through public-private collaboration, based on a high level of technological and innovative content, and seeking to generate a major impact across the entire value chain and, consequently, across industry as a whole."

To date, transformative projects have been approved in the fields of aerospace; advanced manufacturing and intelligent robotics; renewable fuels; electricity grids; the electric maritime sector; the circular steel industry; and, "of course, a project in the bioscience and healthcare industry, led by I+Med, involving 11 companies, five of them SMEs, the health cluster and nine organisations from the Basque Science, Technology and Innovation Network. **Overall, it will involve an initial investment of €72 million over the next three years, €28 million of which will be allocated to R&D and technological development, and will generate more than 600 new jobs, 232 of them direct jobs.**"

United Kingdom, Guest Nation at BIOSPAIN 2026

The United Kingdom will be the Guest Nation at BIOSPAIN 2026, strengthening the international dimension of the event and **the connection between two of Europe's most dynamic biotechnology ecosystems**. Its participation will seek to foster new partnerships between British and Spanish organisations in research, innovation,

business development and investment, leveraging complementary capabilities in areas such as advanced therapies, genomics, artificial intelligence, industrial biotechnology and agri-food biotechnology.

The UK presence will include a **pavilion bringing together a range of companies and organisations from the sector**, as well as **networking activities** and a **panel dedicated to exploring opportunities for collaboration between Spain and the United Kingdom through Horizon Europe**. UK participation will also extend to the wider BIOSPAIN programme, with British experts taking part in various congress sessions.

The United Kingdom is currently home to one of the world's most advanced life sciences ecosystems. The sector comprises around **7,320 companies** and employs approximately **359,600 people across the country**, with a turnover of **£146.9 billion**. In addition, the UK accounts for **11.5% of global academic citations in medical sciences**, underscoring the strength of its research base. This strength is underpinned by centres of excellence ranging from the well-known **“Golden Triangle” of London, Oxford and Cambridge** to growing regional hubs such as Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool and South Wales. It is further reinforced by an industrial strategy that has reduced clinical trial timelines to under 150 days, helping to accelerate the development and market introduction of new treatments.

A programme addressing biotechnology's major challenges

[The BIOSPAIN 2026 programme](#) is structured around four main tracks ~ **Policy, Health, Bioeconomy and Finance & Investment** ~ providing a cross-cutting perspective on the advances, challenges and opportunities shaping the future of biotechnology. The congress will also feature national and international **keynote speakers**, including **Juan Bueren**, an internationally renowned researcher and clinician in gene therapy and advanced therapies, who will examine the advances and challenges of new therapies for rare diseases.

The competitiveness of European biotechnology and the strengthening of strategic autonomy will take centre stage. The programme will address issues including adapting regulation to emerging technologies, Europe's capacity to manufacture vaccines, diagnostics and therapies, preparedness for future health crises and the protection of innovation. Particular attention will be paid to the **Biotech Act**, with two sessions dedicated to examining, firstly, how to incentivise innovation, strengthen capabilities and improve access to funding and, secondly, how to accelerate scale-up, biomanufacturing and the development of competitive value chains in Europe.

These debates will **bring together prominent national and European institutional representatives**, including **Javier Padilla**, Secretary of State for Health; **Raquel Yotti**, Commissioner for the PERTE for Vanguard Health; **Thomas Van Cangel**, Deputy Head of Unit and Head of the Biotech Taskforce at DG SANTE; **Miguel Gómez-Pavón López**, from the Directorate-General for Industrial Strategy and SMEs at Spain's Ministry of Industry and Tourism; and **Kristin Schreiber**, Director at the European Commission, among others.

BIOSPAIN, a platform for building partnerships and business opportunities

Beyond its conference programme, one of BIOSPAIN's greatest strengths is its ability to **connect companies, investors, research centres and institutions** and turn these encounters into genuine **opportunities for collaboration and business**. Through its [partnering platform](#), participants can identify potential partners and schedule bilateral meetings during the congress, fostering agreements and projects that may lay the foundations for future innovations.

The importance of this networking platform was demonstrated at the previous edition of BIOSPAIN, held in Barcelona, **where 4,500 bilateral meetings took place**. In 2026, partnering will once again be one of the pillars of the event, **helping to drive new collaborations, investment, knowledge transfer and national and international partnerships**.

Talent Day: connecting talent with the biotechnology industry

The final day of [BIOSPAIN 2026](#) will host [Talent Day](#), a space dedicated to connecting students, researchers and professionals with companies and organisations in the biotechnology sector, showcasing the career opportunities offered by the industry and helping companies access the specialised profiles they need.

The day will combine **sessions** on professional development and talent attraction and retention with **interviews and networking opportunities between companies and candidates**. Topics will include the wide range of career paths available beyond academic research, the transition from university to industry, and the challenges involved in attracting and retaining specialised life sciences talent.

[Visit the BIOSPAIN 2026 website](#)

About AseBio

The Spanish Bioindustry Association (AseBio) brings together 350 organisations and represents Spain's biotechnology sector as a whole. Its mission is to lead the country's transformation by positioning science, innovation and biotechnology in particular as drivers of economic growth and social well-being. Its members include companies, associations, foundations, universities, technology centres and research centres whose activities are directly or indirectly related to biotechnology in Spain.

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