

**mercabarna**  
The Mediterranean-  
Barcelona Food  
Hub®

Mercados de Abastecimientos

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# What is Mercabarna?

Mercabarna is a food city that works 24 hours a day to provide the public with fresh food. Almost 600 companies specialising in the preparation, distribution, import and export of fresh and frozen products operate in the area, which annually sell close to 2.5 million tons of food and 6.5 million units of flowers, plants and complements. This makes Mercabarna one of the main wholesale markets in Europe, both for the volume and variety of products and for the scope of its influence.

# Strategic location

Located in Zona Franca Industrial Estate, the Mercabarna complex is located a few kilometres from the airport and Port of Barcelona the rail and road network. It is a strategic location next to important transport infrastructure that guarantees the entry and exit of perishable food by land, sea and air. Its location and the range of products sold favour its positioning as the Mediterranean-Barcelona Food Hub.





**Multimodal logistics**

**Km 0 production**

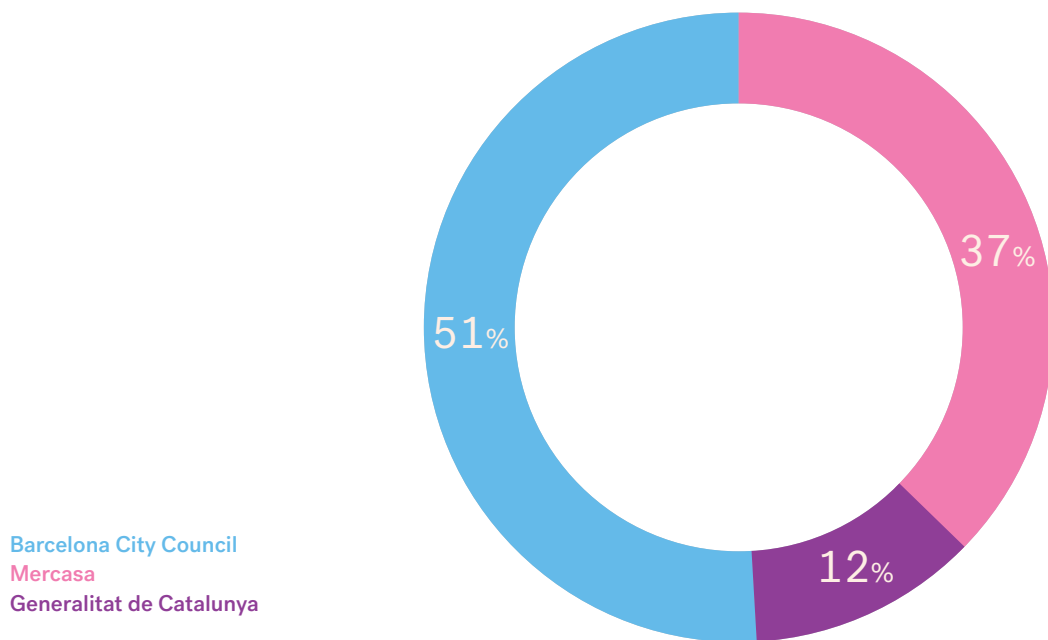
**Airport logistics**

# Management of the food hub

Mercabarna is a limited commercial company, founded in 1967. The main shareholders are Barcelona Serveis Municipals, a **Barcelona City Council company** (51%), **Mercasa** (37%) and **Generalitat de Catalunya** (12%).

Mercabarna is part of the Mercasa wholesale market network, which is made up of 24 food units distributed throughout Spain.

It is part of several organisations and institutions due to its significant role in the fresh food supply chain, its role in promoting the Mediterranean diet, and its commitment to the environment and society.





As part of its daily management, Mercabarna provides a range of basic services that ensure the proper functioning of the food unit and the well-being of its users. Security, cleaning, waste management, facility maintenance and improvement works are some examples.

Food safety is one of the essential elements in Mercabarna's operation. To ensure compliance with health regulations, the Mercabarna premises have a team of veterinarians and support staff from the Public Health Agency of Barcelona responsible for the sanitary and hygiene control of products.

## Public-private collaboration

The main decisions that affect the operation of the food hub are agreed upon between Mercabarna and the business associations in which most of the companies in the area are grouped: the Concessionaire Association (ASSOCOME), the Association of Fruit and Vegetable Wholesalers of Barcelona and Province (AGEM), the Farmer Association of Mercabarna, the Guild of Wholesalers of the Central Fish Market (GMP) and the Association of Wholesalers of Mercabarna-flor (AEM).

This **collaboration model between the public and private sectors** explains much of Mercabarna's success, as it guarantees that the various actors within the Food Unit move in a direction of understanding and cooperation.

# Mercabarna in numbers

107<sup>HA</sup>

between Barcelona  
and Sant Boi

7.500

people work in the  
companies within the area

2.5

million tonnes  
marketed

600

companies

12.500

vehicles per day

23.000

people access it daily

35%

product exported

72%

of waste revalorization

10

million  
consumers

800.000 m<sup>3</sup>

of refrigeration chambers,  
the largest concentration  
of cold storage in Spain.

## Map of Mercabarna:

- The Central Fruit and Vegetable Market
- The Central Fish Market
- ZAC (Complementary Activities Zone)
- Multi-purpose Pavilion
- Biomarket
- Foodback
- The Green Point



# The Central Fruit and Vegetable Market

Originally located in Mercat del Born in Barcelona, the Central Fruit and Vegetable Market was the first to be established in Mercabarna, specifically in 1971.

The market has 440 points of sale where nearly two hundred companies operate, including wholesalers, farmers and cooperatives. With an area of 170,000 m<sup>2</sup> spread over seven depots, it is the Market that generates the most commercial and human movement in Mercabarna and is one of the few wholesale markets in the world that operates during the day.

Its trade volume is over 1.2 million tons of products, distributed all over the world. Domestic products account for 75% of the total sold at Mercabarna, while imported products make up 25%.



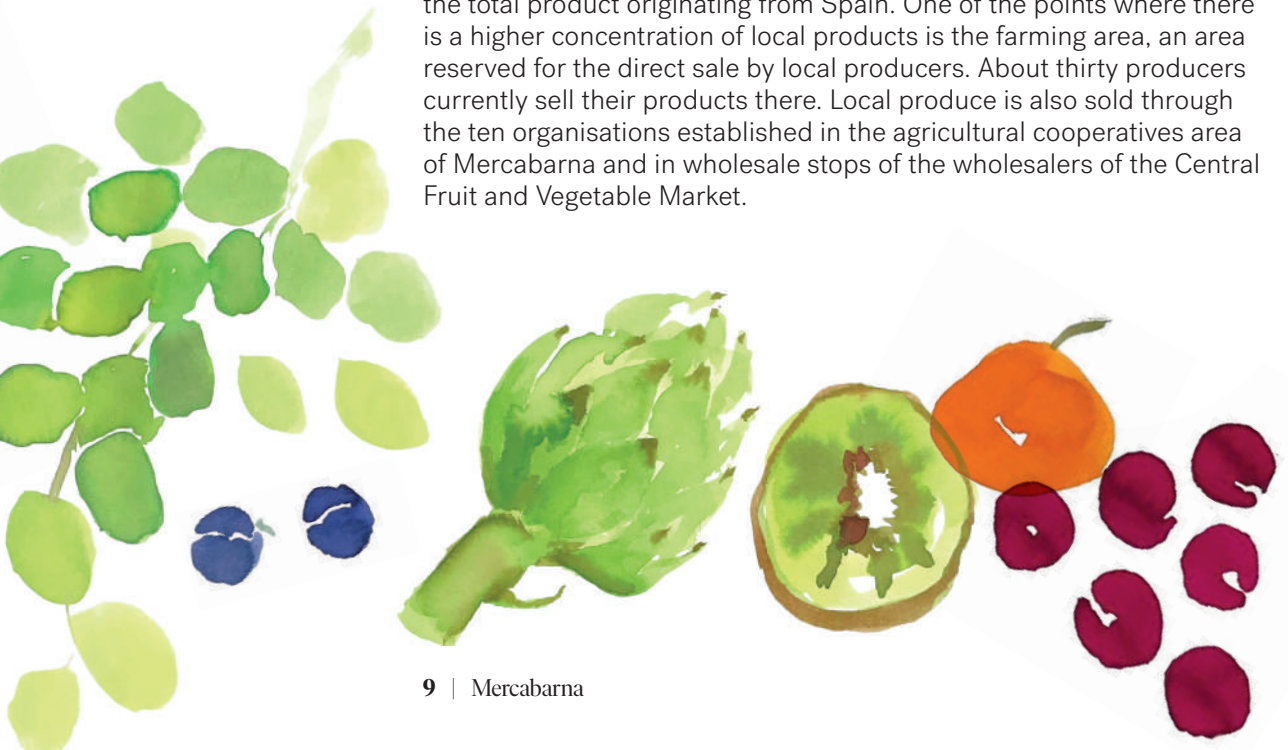
The Central Fruit and Vegetable Market is one of the few wholesale markets in the world that operates during the day.



## Local Mercabarna

Mercabarna is committed to a local farming model to make the food system more sustainable and resilient and to strengthen relations between the countryside and the urban world.

The sale of local products in Mercabarna accounts for around 17% of the total product originating from Spain. One of the points where there is a higher concentration of local products is the farming area, an area reserved for the direct sale by local producers. About thirty producers currently sell their products there. Local produce is also sold through the ten organisations established in the agricultural cooperatives area of Mercabarna and in wholesale stops of the wholesalers of the Central Fruit and Vegetable Market.



# Central Fish Market

The Central Fish Market moved to Mercabarna in 1983, coming from Carrer Wellington in Barcelona, in La Ciutadella.

The Market occupies about 35,000 m<sup>2</sup>, around forty wholesale companies work there in 80 sales points equipped with handling rooms to carry out the cleaning and cutting work. It also has thermally suitable spaces for the sale of frozen foods and 14 distribution points (gathering sites). The Market trades 70,000 tons of product per year, 86% of which are fresh, and the remaining 14% is frozen product.

The largest part of the supply comes from the Mediterranean and Cantabrian coasts, but it also markets products imported from seas and oceans around the world.





Companies take advantage of the strategic location and its connection to international distribution and logistics networks to deliver orders by land, sea and air to anywhere in the world.







# Mercabarna-flor

Mercabarna-flor began operating at Mercabarna in 1984, originating from the former flower market on Lleida Street in Barcelona. In 2008, the new flower market, called Mercabarna-flor, was inaugurated on a 4.5-hectare site located in Sant Boi de Llobregat.

Mercabarna's floral sector is made up of twenty wholesale companies that sell more than 6.5 million units each year between cut flowers, plants and complements.

Apart from commercial activity, creativity and commitment to training is essential for Mercabarna-flor. The Market has within its facilities a floral art school, and events are organised throughout the year, which allow professionals to stay up to date with sector news and acquire new knowledge.



# Value-added services

One of the competitive advantages of Mercabarna compared to other food hubs is that it has accommodated companies that add value to the product and provide added value to the customers to meet the current needs of trade and consumption.

## ZAC

The Complementary Activities Zone (ZAC) has almost 300 companies spread over 233,000 m<sup>2</sup> and distributes more than one million tonnes of fruit and vegetables, fish, seafood and meat.

Activities such as the production of quarter ranges are carried out there (clean and cut salads; peeled and cut fruits; scaled, gutted and cut fish, etc.), fruit ripeners, potato centres, purchasing centres for fruit shop chains and distribution, nurseries and seafood cooking, large public-use refrigerators, companies that supply the catering sector, importers and exporters, and logistics and transportation companies specialising in perishable foods. There are also companies that specialise in the production, trade and distribution of all kinds of meat products.





## Multi-purpose Pavilion

The multi-purpose pavilion brings together a dozen companies dedicated to the **marketing of processed and semi-processed products**: frozen foods, preserves, dairy, beverages, wines, eggs, cheeses, salted fish, spices, sausages, pastries, etc. This space allows buying retailers to complete their purchases made at central markets.

## User Services

The premises host companies offering services aimed at workers such as petrol stations, hotel, vehicle charging points, pharmacy, childcare and banking entities, among others.

The restaurateurs can obtain their supplies at Mercabarna through the wholesale fruit and vegetable, fish and flower markets or through more than 70 companies specializing in the HORECA sector.





## Biomarket

The Biomarket is the wholesale market specialising in organic fruit and vegetables in Mercabarna. It has an area of 8,900 m<sup>2</sup>, offering 21 wholesale points, and all products from organic agriculture are certified in accordance with European regulations.

### The different types of buyers who source from Mercabarna

Mercabarna is a wholesale market that is aimed solely and exclusively at professionals in the sector. The buyer profile consists of small and medium specialised retail businesses, wholesalers from all over Spain, retail chains of fruit and distribution, the catering sector, and importers and exporters.

The area of influence of the companies in the venue is 10 million people. The products of the companies in the venue reach Spain and numerous countries in Europe and other parts of the world.

# +Sustainable

## A sustainability model for the food industry

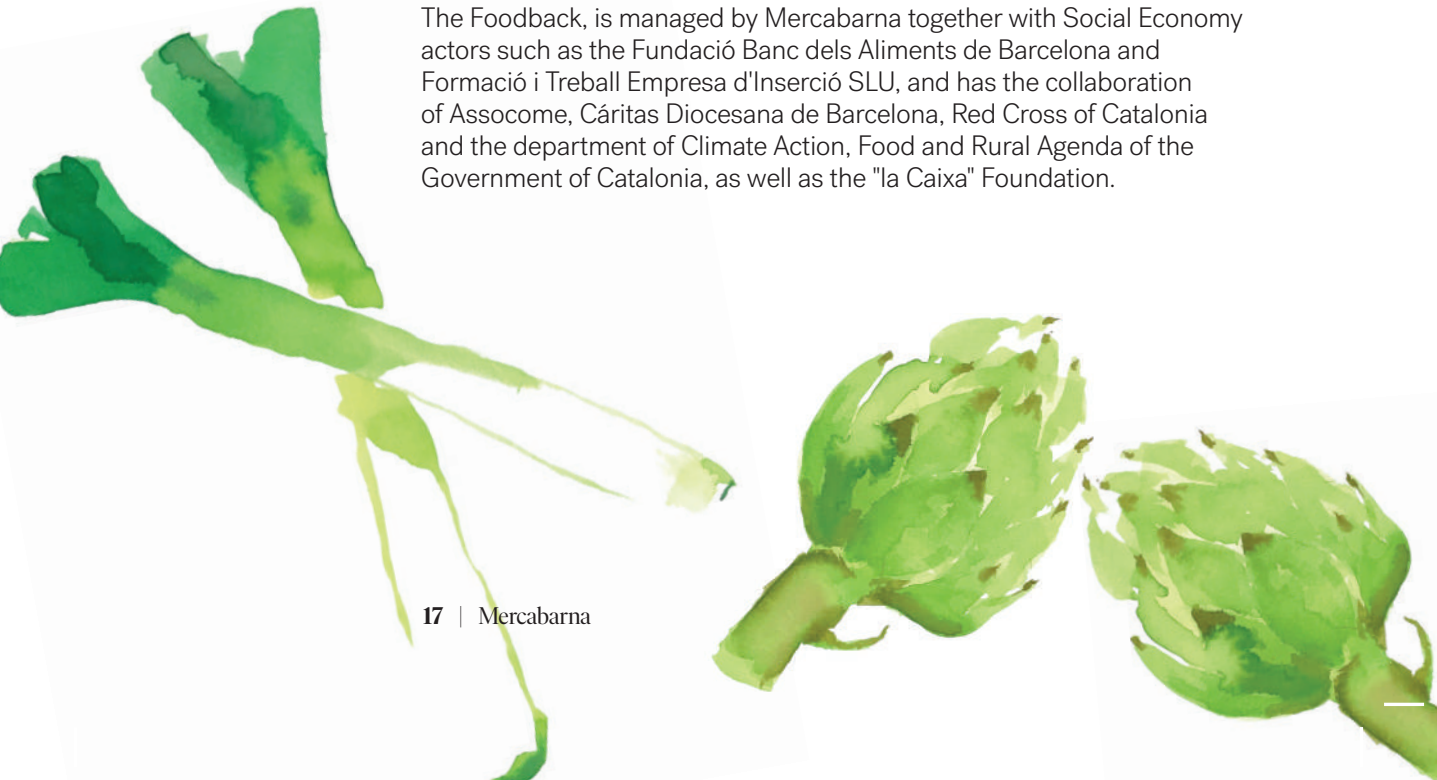
Mercabarna carries out a series of sustainable practices that are vital to reduce its environmental impact and to promote a more responsible development model in the food sector.

## Initiatives to combat food waste in Mercabarna

The **Foodback**, the food surplus centre, is a pioneering circular bio-economy project that aims to increase the use of non-marketable fruit and vegetables suitable for human consumption. The project is possible thanks to the collaboration and involvement of 10 entities and the companies located in Mercabarna.

At Foodback, surplus fruits and vegetables provided by wholesale companies from the main market are sorted to give them a second life. After this screening, products suitable for human consumption are distributed to social entities throughout Catalonia to reach people in situations of vulnerability.

The Foodback, is managed by Mercabarna together with Social Economy actors such as the Fundació Banc dels Aliments de Barcelona and Formació i Treball Empresa d'Inserció SLU, and has the collaboration of Assocom, Càritas Diocesana de Barcelona, Red Cross of Catalonia and the department of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda of the Government of Catalonia, as well as the "la Caixa" Foundation.





Mercabarna's waste management system includes other specific infrastructure, such as intelligent compactors that allow analysing the use and weighing of deposited waste, and the **Green Point**, which ensures the correct treatment of waste.

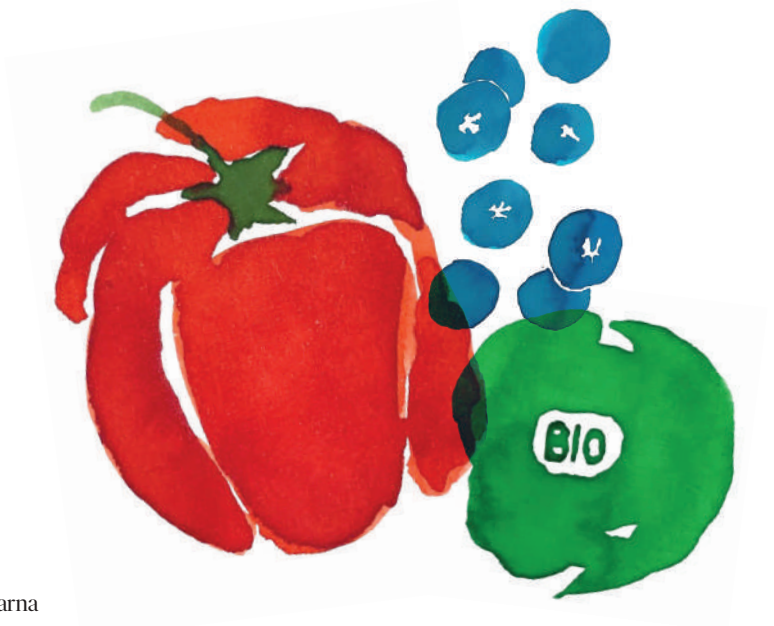
The Green Point is a collection centre specialised in separating organic and inorganic commercial waste. This system, a benchmark for sustainability among the world's wholesale markets, makes it possible for the volume of recycling to reach levels higher than 72% of the total waste generated by daily activity.

## Awards against food waste

Mercabarna celebrates the **Paco Muñoz Awards** against food waste biannually. These awards are designed to promote and recognise the initiatives that are carried out to fight food waste in the production and distribution link of the food chain.

## Sustainability in the energy field

Through the **RePower Mercabarna-Energia** program, Mercabarna is working to install photovoltaic panels for its own consumption on all the roofs of the premises, which will make it one of the largest plants in the Iberian Peninsula. This will result in a saving of approximately 6,000 tons of CO2 emissions per year into the atmosphere and a coverage of 25% of the energy needs.





# + Competitive

## **The engine of innovation in the food sector**

Mercabarna promotes various initiatives to enhance the competitiveness of the companies within the premises. In this sense, the Mercabarna-Barcelona Food Cluster is responsible for stimulating synergies between companies and promoting projects in the fields of export, food service, innovation, retail and logistics.

## **Space for constant innovation**

Mercabarna promotes innovation within companies and drives the growth of the food sector by becoming a catalyst for ideas and a place where the future of food takes shape. The Food Unit is characterised by its dynamism, an essential trait to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

Mercabarna expanded its area with plot 22AL, which in the coming years will allow it to better adapt to sector changes and consumer demands, thus becoming one of the most important agri-food clusters in Europe.

The **Mercabarna Innova Awards** are aimed at recognising research areas and promoting innovation among the companies in the food hub. The Innova awards recognise projects related to the development of new products, formats and packaging, the use of new technologies, food safety, and sustainability in processes as well as mobility issues, among others.

# +Qualified

## A generator of talent for the food industry

At Mercabarna, the training of new professionals and the generation of talent for the agri-food sector is key to ensuring a sustainable and competitive future.

Mercabarna, offers **training courses** mainly related to the treatment and marketing of fresh produce. This type of training aims to facilitate the insertion of unemployed individuals into jobs while also enabling companies to incorporate professional profiles.

More than 2,000 people are trained at Mercabarna every year and the employment rate of professionals in the food sector is over 70%.

The **Food Institute of Barcelona**, located in Mercabarna, integrates different training cycles in the field of food technology. The Education Consortium and Mercabarna have promoted this project, which is part of the agri-food sector, one of the main drivers of the Catalan economy. Its location is a great opportunity to generate synergies between the educational and business worlds.

Therefore, establishing a network of contacts at Mercabarna can be an effective strategy to find new job opportunities and drive professional growth.

## Mercabarna Jobs

The job portal of the companies located at Mercabarna connects candidates seeking jobs in the agri-food sector with the companies located at Mercabarna.



# +Healthy

## Educational children's campaigns to promote healthy habits

Mercabarna and the Wholesale Guilds of the food hub organise educational campaigns to promote healthy eating habits and encourage respect for the natural environment. More than 12,000 children participate in these three initiatives each year:

- “5 a day”: Mercabarna and the Association of Fruit and Vegetable Wholesalers of Barcelona and Province (AGEM) jointly organise the “5 a day” campaign, an initiative whose main objective is to promote the consumption of fruit and vegetables among school children, as well as among their families, for a healthy and balanced diet and to reduce food waste.
- The “Refresh with 5 a day” Campus is the summer camp organised by Mercabarna aimed at children in situations of social exclusion, which brings healthy eating closer to the youngest through play.
- “Grow with Fish”: an educational project promoted by the Wholesale Guild of the Central Fish Market (GMP) in collaboration with Mercabarna, which promotes the consumption of fish and seafood as part of a healthy diet among children.



Visit to the Fruit and Vegetable Market of the children's campaign "5 in a day".