



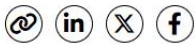
Spanish rights bids invited for co-hosted World Cup



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January 15, 2025

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An invitation to tender (ITT) has been issued in Spain for broadcast rights to the men's FIFA World Cups in 2026 and 2030, the latter of which will be co-hosted by the country.

Spanish listed-events law requires all Spain matches plus the final to be shown on a free-to-air basis, but pay-television broadcasters will be in the running again for the full package.

The 2026 edition will be the first under the expanded model of 48 teams playing 104 matches, leaving even more scope for a subscription broadcaster to enter the fray. There will be 16 host cities across Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Spain will host the 2030 edition alongside Portugal and Morocco. In addition, three matches celebrating the centenary of the World Cup – first held in Uruguay in 1930 – will be held in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The venue of the 2030 final is yet to be determined, though the three proposed stadiums are Madrid's Bernabeu, Barcelona's Nou Camp, and the Grand Stade Hassan II near Casablanca, currently under construction and due to have a capacity of 115,000.

The Mediapro agency's Gol Mundial subscription service broadcast all 64 matches from the 2022 edition in Spain. The service was available for a single payment of €19.99 (\$20.60), without the need to purchase additional services from any other operator.

Mediapro bought the rights to the 2022 World Cup, the 2019 Women's World Cup, and the under-20 and under-17 World Cups played between 2019 and 2022, under a deal announced six years ago.

Subsequently, it was announced that pay-television broadcaster Movistar Plus would show all 64 matches from the World Cup on a new channel.

Public broadcaster RTVE secured free-to-air Qatar 2022 rights from Mediapro, broadcasting all of Spain's matches, along with the opening match, both semi-finals and the final.

The 2022 final attracted an average audience of 9.8 million viewers on La1, RTVE's main channel. The first 90 minutes were watched by an average of 9.1 million viewers (a 57.8-per-cent share) on La1. The audience rose to 11.2 million (a 66.2-per-cent share) during the extra-time period and then 12.2 million (a 69.7-per-cent share) during the penalty shootout.

Spain's surprise round-of-16 defeat to Morocco attracted a Spanish free-to-air television audience of 12.6 million viewers on La1 during the penalty shootout. A record of 5.28 million views were registered for the match on RTVE Play.

The match was watched live on the streaming platform by 1.52 million viewers, making it the second-most watched match of the tournament on RTVE Play (behind Spain v Costa Rica).

Last summer, La1 registered an average of 13.5 million viewers during Spain's Euro 2024 final win over England. The channel reeled in its highest football audience since the Spanish Euro 2012 triumph against Italy.

The bid submission deadline for the World Cup rights is 10am (CET) on February 18. Those wishing to participate can contact Fifa via email (spain-media-rights@fifa.org). Rights to the 2027 Women's World Cup are not being sold at the same time.

Last week, Fifa issued an ITT in Germany for the next two men's Fifa World Cups, as well as one for the 2027 Fifa Women's World Cup.

Late last year, the BBC and ITV extended their uninterrupted live coverage of the Fifa World Cup in the UK to 17 editions after securing rights to the next two men's tournaments. The public broadcaster and commercial network announced that they will share rights to the 2026 and 2030 World Cups, splitting matches between them, with both showing the finals.