



Zespri unveils ZAG, an innovation funding initiative rallying visionaries for a more sustainable future

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Zespri, the world's largest kiwifruit marketer with over \$US2.5 billion in revenue - managing around one-third of the industry's global volume - is proud to announce the establishment of a new innovation funding initiative, known as ZAG.

Powered by its purpose to help people, communities and the environment around the world thrive through the goodness of kiwifruit - ZAG will play an important role in the company's mission. The US\$2 million annual fund will support future innovation initiatives and global strategic partnerships that strengthen Zespri's ability to deliver on its purpose.

ZAG is designed to attract innovative problem solvers from around the world who can help address some of the key challenges the industry faces as it meets growing demand for kiwifruit. Zespri is seeking forward-thinking visionaries, disruptors, dreamers, and darers to help it better innovate in sustainable agriculture, technology, automation, packaging, supply chain, logistics and industry education.

"We have a very clear focus on creating sustainable long-term value for our growers and ZAG will enable us to partner with other innovators to explore ways to do this, whilst also helping restore nature and moving us to a place where healthy eating is a well-established habit," said Jiunn Shih, Chief Marketing, Innovation and Sustainability Officer. "We want to be the ZAG the food system needs. Our ambitions are greater than our capabilities, and with this in mind, we are inviting others to partner with us to help solve challenges that impact our fruit and the wellbeing of people, communities and the environment."

ZAG will support projects that are focused on four core priorities for Zespri: (1) Initiatives that are good for kiwifruit by driving superior quality and lifting on orchard productivity; (2) Initiatives that are good for people by promoting wellbeing through kiwifruit consumption; (3) Initiatives that are good for the environment by protecting and enhancing nature; (4) And finally, initiatives that foster a thriving kiwifruit industry, benefitting growers and the local communities they are a part of.

As one of the world's leading fruit brands, Zespri works with about 4,000 growers around the world to bring healthy and delicious fruit to more than 50 countries and has a set of long-term sustainability targets and goals.

Mr. Shih says ZAG will be closely aligned with Zespri's sustainability programme. "While we're making steady progress, such as a five percent reduction in our shipping emissions through improved charter vessel utilisation, we know it's new partners and solutions that will really unlock change."

"We're inspired by our growers and supply chain partners who are prototyping actions as part of our carbon-neutral trial. And we're pushing forward a partnership approach on shipping by asking other businesses and governments to come with us, so we can stimulate the demand that's needed to accelerate the deployment of greener solutions."

Zespri is developing a science-aligned net-zero roadmap to 2050, has reduced the environmental impact of its packaging with 88 percent now recyclable, reusable or compostable, and last year released its [Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#) which outlines how the company is planning on adapting to the impacts of climate change to help growers.

Zespri has also continued rolling out global nutrition programmes designed to lift the consumption of fresh kiwifruit around the world and created 5 billion healthy eating occasions in the 2022/23 season – well on the way to its goal of lifting this to 6 billion by 2025. It has also supported 35 healthy lifestyle programmes in over 12 countries since 2020.

"We're really excited about the potential ZAG has to increase our efforts in this space. We look forward to working with agri- and food-tech innovators as well as other solution providers, to help Zespri and the kiwifruit industry achieve an even brighter future," said Mr Shih.