

## Zespri invites innovators to accelerate decarbonisation and optimize productivity in orchards

12 March 2025 | News

### Zespri ZAG Innovation Fund launches second year with sustainable future mission



### Zespri ZAG Innovation Fund launches second year with sustainable future mission

As the world's largest kiwifruit marketer, Zespri, which accounts for one-third of the industry's global volume, reaffirms its commitment to the Zespri Innovation Fund, which accelerates sustainable innovation to meet growing demands in the global market.

In the wake of ZAG's launch in November 2023, Zespri is now seeking to rally innovators and pioneers to strengthen climate resilience across every food system and advance productivity and carbon-neutral practices for kiwifruit.

As part of the industry's focus on climate resilience, ZAG is expected to include solutions to help grow better kiwifruit while nurturing soil health by improving water retention, biodiversity and carbon storage to support growers, enhance orchard resilience and safeguard productivity while growing sustainably.

ZAG has already received more than 100 submissions from more than 15 countries, with 11 moving into pilot programs with the fund focusing on four areas:

**(1)** Initiatives that are good for kiwifruit by driving superior quality and lifting orchard productivity; **(2)** Initiatives that are good for people by promoting wellbeing through kiwifruit consumption; **(3)** Initiatives that are beneficial 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.

ZAG pilots have to date explored a variety of sustainability efforts, including the use of biochar on kiwifruit orchards to increase orchard productivity while reducing emissions, technology which analyses the unique chemical signatures emitted by

fruit to support planning around kiwifruit harvesting and the use of microwave sensing technology as a non-destructive method for quality assessment of kiwifruit without waste.

“We’ve had a really positive first year with ZAG. It’s helped connect us with innovative problem solvers from around the world to address key challenges our industry faces as we meet the growing demand for kiwifruit, but this is just the beginning,” said Jiunn Shih, Chief Marketing, Innovation and Sustainability Officer. “For year two, we are heightening our efforts to focus on strengthening climate resilience and solutions that will help us grow a more sustainable future, one kiwifruit at a time.”

“We’ll also be refreshing the focus of ZAG every quarter, initially prioritising climate resilience as part of our pledge to work with partners to be carbon positive by 2035, and then looking at other priorities,” Shih says.

Zespri International Limited with international headquarters located in Mount Maunganui, New Zealand is the largest Kiwifruit marketer in the world, selling in over 50 countries. Zespri works with more than 4,000 growers around the world. . It has licensed growers in Australia, France, Greece, Italy, Japan, Singapore and South Korea, and several other countries are conducting trials.