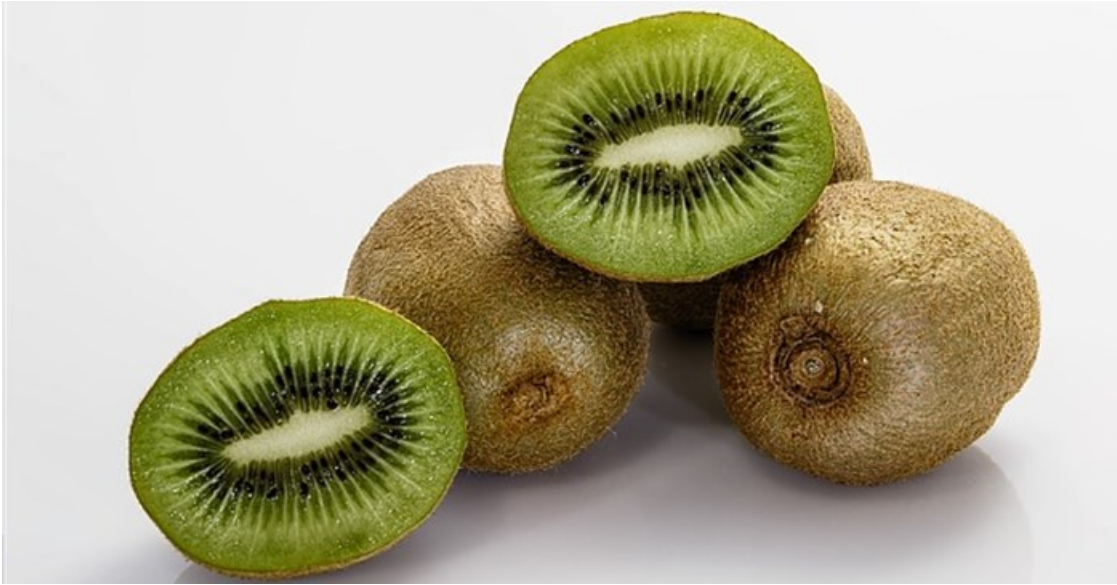


# Zespri launches entrepreneurship programme

Global kiwifruit marketer, Zespri International Limited, in partnership with South African Graduates Development Association (SAGDA) and The Star Workplace, has launched an entrepreneurship programme called "Zesprineur" - a first of its kind for the company. The programme is aimed at young South African entrepreneurs, offering them support before they go to market on their own.



stevepb via [pixabay](#)

“We decided on the Zesprineur project in South Africa as it provides an opportunity to develop future business leaders and showcase the creative breed of entrepreneurs that the country has to offer,” says Lianne Jones, Zespri’s business development manager for Africa, Israel, and Indian Islands. “For an entrepreneur starting out, getting connections to relevant business partners and influencers can be challenging and takes considerable legwork and time. The Zesprineur programme will help speed up the processes as well as give exposure to the finalists.”

## Investing in the future of the kiwifruit industry

This kind of Corporate Social Investment is one of the ways in which Zespri aims to support a sustainable kiwifruit industry and the Zesprineur project sits alongside other initiatives formed by the company across the globe.

Continues Jones, “Our long-standing focus at Zespri has been to invest in the future of our industry by supporting the education of young people. These initiatives range from fundraising for youth charities to supporting community volunteering and sponsoring a teaching resource kit on plants and pollination for local New Zealand schools. In Europe, we support a schools programme to promote the health benefits of regularly eating fruit, so this project aims to complement these successes.”

## Zesprineurs

The ultimate outcome of the South African programme is to support the Zesprineurs as they build their path for future success with support and mentorship. This can range from writing a professional business plan to executing a marketing strategy or even helping to commercialise an idea or product.

The Zesprineur participants were selected from SAGDA members who had to present their business ideas, based on the brief of creating a “kiwi-inspired” product or service. The next stage was to develop a business plan to sell their products or ideas and then present back to the judging panel highlighting what they saw as their major obstacles to getting started. After that, the finalists were chosen based on who had the best ideas and who we could be assisted either through financing or mentoring. In some cases, it was both.

Over the next few months the finalists will be mentored with the winner of the competition to be announced at an event in early December 2016.

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