



Programme Strategy 2026-36

February 2026



Acknowledgements

The AF8 Programme Strategy 2026-36 builds on the programme's activities over the past ten years and has been co-developed by our AF8 Programme partners.

Ngā mihi nui, big thanks, to all individuals, partners, organisations, and stakeholders who have contributed to the programme over the last decade, and the development of this strategy. Your support and expertise are critical to our collective effort in building resilience and preparedness to the next large Alpine Fault earthquake.

Review schedule 2026-2036

Year one	January 2027	AF8 Programme Year 11	LTP cycle 2027–2037
Year four	January 2030	AF8 Programme Year 14	LTP cycle 2030-2040
Year seven	January 2033	AF8 Programme Year 17	LTP cycle 2033-2036



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Executive summary

AF8 [Alpine Fault magnitude 8] is an award-winning programme of scientific research, coordinated planning and community engagement designed to build collective resilience to the next Alpine Fault earthquake, across Te Waipounamu our South Island.

The programme aims to share natural hazard and risk science, and preparedness information widely, through communication and engagement activities, to increase awareness, enable conversations and build societal preparedness to natural hazard events in Aotearoa New Zealand.

A decade of resilience building

What began as a 1-2 year project in 2016 has now evolved into a longer-term programme of work. The AF8 Programme is now recognised as a leader in how Aotearoa New Zealand coordinates, communicates, plans and prepares for complex natural hazard events.

Over the past 10 years, the programme has proved extremely successful as a mechanism to bring researchers, agencies, communities, and regions together to tackle the complex problem of a magnitude 8 Alpine Fault earthquake. This evolution has been driven by a strong partnership between science, emergency management, and communities across Te Waipounamu. Through extensive stakeholder engagement, initiatives like the AF8 Roadshow and SAFER Framework,

and a commitment to collaborative action, the programme has successfully raised awareness, built relationships, strengthened networks and fostered a culture of preparedness.

But are we ready for the next large Alpine Fault earthquake? No. We continue to build strong foundations, relationships and trust, which has generated an appetite for action, but there is still more to do.

A strategic shift: awareness to action

The AF8 Programme Strategy 2026-2036 represents a strategic shift that reflects both the programme's maturity and our collective understanding of what it takes to build genuine community resilience. Where the previous strategy focused on raising awareness, coordinating intelligence, and networking and collaboration, this new strategy takes a more participatory and dynamic approach through three interconnected Strategic Focus Areas:

SFA 1: Enabling Public Participation moves beyond awareness-raising to actively enable communities to participate in their own resilience building, recognising that preparedness requires active engagement and locally-led action.

SFA 2: Knowledge Brokering & Exchange focuses on enabling two-way knowledge flows between scientists, emergency managers, mana whenua and communities, and connecting AF8-related science with regional research and local knowledge.

SFA 3: Networking & Collaboration maintains its focus on enabling networks for ongoing collaboration, with a new emphasis on recovery planning and resilience building across research, policy and practice.

The strategy aims to build and capitalise on our successes to enable a clear path to meet short to long-term outcomes for Te Waipounamu and Aotearoa New Zealand. It is underpinned by five principles—Advocacy, Partnership, Collaboration, Co-creation, and Innovation—and is closely aligned with New Zealand's National Disaster Resilience Strategy.



What is AF8?

The AF8 Programme is an interdisciplinary partnership between emergency management, science and communities. Our aim is to build collective resilience for the next large Alpine Fault earthquake, across the South Island.

Led by the six South Island Emergency Management (EM) Groups in partnership with key science partners – e.g. QuakeCoRE: NZ Centre for Earthquake Resilience and the Natural Hazards & Resilience Platform – AF8 operates as a ‘boundary organisation’ connecting research, policy, and practice. It is co-funded by the six South Island EM groups and science partners. This base funding is enhanced with project sponsorship from the Natural Hazard Commission (NHC), and in-kind support from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

Governance and leadership for the programme is provided by the AF8 Steering Group comprising the 6 South Island Group Managers, science and regional governance leaders, and a National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) representative. Emergency Management Canterbury acts as the chair for the AF8 Steering Group. Emergency Management Southland acts as the administrative authority for the AF8 Programme.

It is important to understand that the AF8 Programme has no statutory role, nor will it take on the role of managing a response to an Alpine Fault earthquake. These responsibilities lie with the EM Groups, NEMA and their partner agencies.

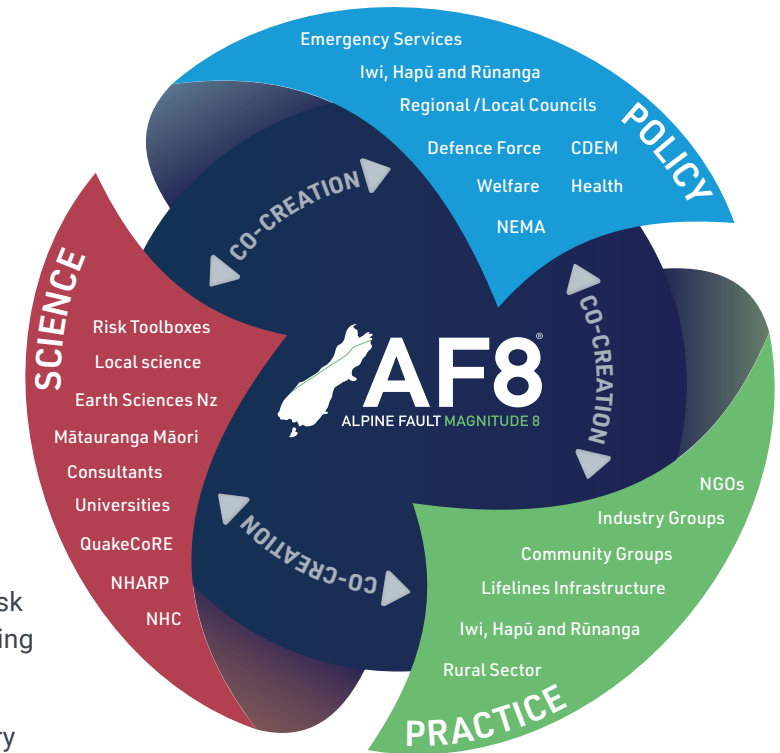
However, AF8 represents a partner network that serves several functions:

- Bringing together emergency managers, scientists, policymakers, practitioners and communities to build resilience for emergency events.
- Providing a conduit for the direct application of Alpine Fault related research to support policy and practice.
- Facilitating knowledge exchange and enabling engagement between AF8 science, local research, emergency managers, and the public.
- Translating and communicating hazard risk science to enable informed decision-making for planning and preparedness.

All of these roles and responsibilities align very closely to the National Disaster Resilience Strategy aim, which includes managing risks (e.g. identifying and understanding risk scenarios) and enabling, empowering and supporting community resilience (e.g. cultivating connectedness). AF8 has been extraordinarily successful in this regard, winning awards for communication and engagement (AF8 Roadshow)¹ and collaborative action (SAFER Framework)².

1. <https://af8.org.nz/af8-roadshow-empa-award/>

2. <https://af8.org.nz/af8-receives-excellence-award/>



Background Context

Early 1900s	Geological mapping carried out across Aotearoa New Zealand.
1929	Murchison Earthquake.
1940s	Geologist Harold Wellman proposes the existence of a major fault running the length of the South Island, the Alpine Fault – a revolutionary idea at the time.
1960s	The global understanding of plate tectonics provides the scientific explanation of the Alpine Fault's movement.
1968	Inangahua Earthquake.
2010-11	Canterbury Earthquake Sequence.
2012	30% chance of an Alpine Fault earthquake in the next 50 years published by GNS Science.
2013	Exercise Te Ripahapa – A South Island-wide emergency management exercise based on a large earthquake on the Alpine Fault.
2016	AF8 Programme initiated to develop a hazard scenario and coordinate response planning for a large Alpine Fault earthquake in the South Island. Co-funded by the MCDEM Resilience Fund and science partners.

2016	Kaikōura Earthquake.
2016-19	First 3 years of 'AF8' develop AND deliver: AF8 Hazard Scenario, AF8 SAFER Framework and AF8 Roadshow.
2019-2020	MCDEM funding ends. Six South Island EM Groups established collective funding model to maintain progress.
2020	Independent programme evaluation confirms the AF8's impact and value as a mechanism for collaboration, coordination, and collective action.
2021	Alpine Fault probability updated to 75% chance of rupture in next 50 years.
2022	AF8 Programme Strategy 2022-25 established three strategic focus areas: Raising Awareness, Coordinating Intelligence, and Networking & Collaboration.
2023	AF8 Programme receives funding from NEMA Resilience Fund to support the implementation of the 2022-25 strategy.
2024	National Exercise Rū Whenua based on the AF8 Hazard Scenario.
2026-36	New 10-year strategy established, emphasising participation, knowledge exchange, and collaboration.

AF8 stands for 'Alpine Fault magnitude 8'.

Over the past 10 years, the term '**AF8**' has evolved into an umbrella term, representing a range of meanings. In the interest of clarity, the following meanings of 'AF8' are defined as:

- **AF8 Programme:** is an award-winning programme of scientific modelling, coordinated response planning, and community engagement, designed to build resilience to the next Alpine Fault earthquake.
- **AF8 earthquake:** a magnitude 8 earthquake on the Alpine Fault.
- **AF8 Hazard Scenario:** (also known as the AF8 Scenario) underpins the AF8 Programme, where science provides a robust foundation for response and recovery planning, risk communication, and community engagement.
- **AF8 Partner Network:** The AF8 Programme's funding partners and their networks – the 6 South Island EM Groups, iwi, hapū and rūnanga, communities, NEMA, NHC, our science partners (e.g. ESNZ, QuakeCoRE, Natural Hazards & Resilience Platform, Universities and other natural hazard programmes).

Our Partners and their critical contributions.

The AF8 Programme is not responsible for the mandated roles of its core partners: the 6 South Island EM Groups, science and research organisations, and NEMA. However, the successful implementation of this strategy is reliant on the contributions, cooperation and participation of these partners. AF8's mission and objectives do not operate in isolation, and should be embedded in partner workplans.

This table outlines the roles and critical contributions of the AF8 Programme's core funding partners as they relate to this strategy.

South Island EM Groups	Science Partners	NEMA
As regional representatives, EM Groups are focused on response planning in their region, preparing their communities for an Alpine Fault earthquake, maintaining regional relationships and providing strategic leadership for the AF8 programme.	As leaders in science excellence, AF8's science partners are responsible for growing AF8's knowledge-base, responding to knowledge gaps and making the latest Alpine Fault-related science accessible, applicable and actionable.	As Steward, Assurer and Operator, NEMA is responsible for national planning, supporting capability/capacity to enable the progression of regional work and maintaining central government relationships to enable progress.
Critical Contributions: ➤ Communicating and disseminating AF8 information into their organisations, partners, agencies, local authorities and communities. ➤ Leading AF8 regional and district planning in their regions, in collaboration with national planning. ➤ Leading and hosting workshops, talks, forums etc. in their regions. ➤ Advocating for AF8 in the regions, with communities, partner agencies and local authorities. ➤ Enabling EM staff to participate in AF8-related activities. ➤ Enabling partnerships with Iwi Māori and mana whenua representation on the steering group. ➤ Funding the programme lead role and co-funding AF8 Programme activities.	Critical Contributions: ➤ Providing timely, up-to-date science advice and information. ➤ Progressing research for hazard resilience, responding to knowledge gaps with new research, and feeding it back into the AF8 Programme. ➤ Publishing knowledge to enable AF8's learnings to be shared widely and with credibility. ➤ Advocating for AF8 in research institutions and associated organisations. ➤ Support and enable Māori-led research aspirations and engage with Vision Mātauranga. ➤ Co-funding AF8 Programme activities and the programme lead role.	Critical Contributions: ➤ Leading national catastrophic planning and supporting AF8 regional planning. ➤ Providing planning resource to ensure national workplans do not surpass regional capabilities. ➤ Providing strategic leadership for AF8 readiness, response and recovery activities to build emergency management capability and capacity. ➤ Advocating for AF8 at central government level, with national agencies and North Island EM. ➤ Enabling iwi partnerships and representation on the steering group. ➤ Provide in-kind resources towards the AF8 Programme activities, and planning and recovery support roles.

Our Vision, Mission and Principles

The AF8 Programme envisions an Aotearoa New Zealand that is aware of the Alpine Fault hazard risk and enabled to take action to build resilience. Our mission brings together emergency management and science to enable informed decision-making, and build Te Waipounamu our South Island's resilience to a future Alpine Fault earthquake.

Our work is focused across three strategic areas – enabling public participation, facilitating knowledge exchange, and supporting networks – and is guided by principles of advocacy, partnership, collaboration, co-creation, and innovation.

- **Advocacy:** Championing Alpine Fault preparedness and resilience in Aotearoa New Zealand. We advocate for coordinated approaches to resilience building, across research, policy and practice.
- **Partnership:** Strengthening networks and relationships between science, emergency management, mana whenua, and communities. We work together to increase our collective impact.
- **Collaboration:** Working across sectors and disciplines to enable knowledge exchange and informed decision-making. We collaborate to drive collective action for Alpine Fault preparedness.
- **Co-creation:** Designing solutions with partners, educators and communities to enable participation. We co-create resources to make Alpine Fault-related knowledge accessible, applicable and actionable.
- **Innovation:** Pursuing creative approaches to resilience. We embrace and explore novel methods for risk communication, engagement, knowledge exchange, and resilience planning.

Our Vision

Aotearoa New Zealand is aware of and resilient to a future Alpine Fault earthquake

Our Mission

Emergency management and science working together to enable informed decision-making, and build Te Waipounamu our South Island's resilience to a future Alpine Fault earthquake

Our Strategic Focus Areas

Enabling Public Participation

Enabling public participation in community readiness, to support informed decision-making and enhance resilience.

Knowledge Brokering & Exchange

Facilitate the connection and exchange of knowledge between scientists, emergency managers and the public to inform, influence and support decision-making and resilient planning.

Networking & Collaboration

Supporting networks for collaboration and advocating for a coordinated approach to readiness and recovery planning for an Alpine Fault earthquake.

Our Principles

Advocacy

Partnership

Collaboration

Co-creation

Innovation

Our Strategic Focus Areas & Objectives

SFA 1: Enabling Public Participation	Objectives:	We will do this by:
Enabling public participation in community resilience, to support informed decision-making and enhance readiness.	A. To support South Island EM groups and communities to be better prepared for emergency events.	➤ Raising awareness: Maintaining an engaging, up-to-date AF8 website and digital media presence. ➤ Coordinating engagement: Coordinating and delivering the AF8 Roadshow with EM Groups and science partners every second year (2027 onwards). ➤ Communicating research: Supporting regular, targeted science presentations and engagement, making the latest research accessible and applicable. ➤ Enabling participation: Co-designing public education and readiness initiatives with partners to enable public participation.
	B. To build capability in hazard risk communication across communities to support South Island planning and collective preparedness activities.	➤ Co-developing, designing and maintaining resources to: ▪ Support EM Groups and partner agencies to deliver risk communication, public education, and resilience initiatives. ▪ Enable community-led resilience conversations and initiatives. ▪ Support educators to teach natural hazards, risk, and resilience concepts in a New Zealand context.

SFA 1 alignment with NDRS Objectives:

Objective 3: Build risk awareness, risk literacy, and risk management capability, including the ability to assess risk.

Objective 10: Ensure it is clear who is responsible for what, nationally, regionally, and locally, in response and recovery; enable and empower community-level response, and ensure it is connected into wider coordinated responses, when and where necessary.

Objective 13: Enable and empower individuals, households, organisations, and businesses to build their resilience, paying particular attention to those people and groups who may be disproportionately affected by disasters.

Objective 14: Cultivate an environment for social connectedness which promotes a culture of mutual help; embed a collective impact approach to building community resilience.

Objective 18: Recognise the importance of culture to resilience, including to support the continuity of cultural places, institutions and activities, and to enable the participation of different cultures in resilience.

SFA 2: Knowledge Brokering & Exchange	Objectives:	We will do this by:
Facilitate the connection and exchange of knowledge between scientists, emergency managers and the public to inform, influence and support decision-making and resilience planning.	A. To enable knowledge brokering and exchange between research, policy and practice.	➤ Providing access: Making the AF8 Hazard Scenario accessible in diverse formats (presentations, webinars, interactive tools, visual media) to support preparedness and planning activities. ➤ Linking research: Connecting AF8 Hazard Scenario science with regional council research to enable the localised application of Alpine Fault-related knowledge. ➤ Supporting interpretation: Translating natural hazard and risk research into locally relevant contexts to inform regional resilience planning. ➤ Enabling knowledge exchange: Supporting peer-to-peer knowledge sharing between science, policy and practice to strengthen collective learning.
	B. To inform, influence and support innovation, decision-making and testing for resilient planning.	➤ Coordinating knowledge: Maintain and develop the AF8 Research & Readiness Hub content, sharing protocols and access processes. ➤ Co-designing tools: Co-designing innovative knowledge sharing tools with programme partners to make Alpine Fault related research accessible, applicable and actionable. ➤ Coordinating feedback: Implementing feedback mechanisms to assess and improve knowledge exchange effectiveness. ➤ Knowledge brokering: Identifying critical knowledge gaps and potential barriers to resilience, to guide future research.

SFA 2 alignment with NDRS Objectives:

Objective 1: Identify and understand risk scenarios (including the components of hazard, exposure, vulnerability, and capacity), and use this knowledge to inform decision-making.

Objective 3: Build risk awareness, risk literacy, and risk management capability, including the ability to assess risk.

Objective 12: Improve the information and intelligence system that supports decision-making in emergencies to enable informed, timely, and consistent decisions by stakeholders and the public.

SFA 3: Networking & Collaboration	Objectives:	We will do this by:
Support networking and collaboration between emergency management, scientists, mana whenua, communities and partner agencies to coordinate a South Island approach to resilience planning.	A. To support networks for ongoing collaboration and collective action across research, policy and practice.	➤ Bringing people together: Coordinating workshops and forums to enable interdisciplinary networking and collaboration. ➤ Strengthening networks: Facilitating links between communities of practice, knowledge holders, mana whenua, and cross-sectoral partners to strengthen resilience networks.
	B. To support wider resilience building activities across research, policy and practice.	➤ Sharing knowledge: Presenting on the AF8 Scenario and the programme's activities at conferences, exercises and workshops. ➤ Building collective understanding: Supporting collaboration between AF8-related research and emergency management practice to inform recovery planning. ➤ Enabling collaboration: Maintaining and developing the AF8 Programme Hub (in Teams and Sharepoint) to enable file sharing and collaborative working.

SFA 3 alignment with NDRS Objectives:

Objective 2: Put in place organisational structures and identify necessary processes – including being informed by community perspectives – to understand and act on reducing risks.

Objective 8: Build the relationship between emergency management organisations and iwi/groups representing Māori, to ensure greater recognition, understanding, and integration of iwi/Māori perspectives and tikanga in emergency management

Objective 14: Cultivate an environment for social connectedness which promotes a culture of mutual help; embed a collective impact approach to building community resilience.

Objective 15: Take a whole of city/district/region approach to resilience, including to embed strategic objectives for resilience in key plans and strategies.

Objective 17: Embed a strategic, resilience approach to recovery planning that takes account of risks identified, recognises long-term priorities and opportunities to build back better, and ensures the needs of the affected are at the centre of recovery processes.

Objective 18: Recognise the importance of culture to resilience, including to support the continuity of cultural places, institutions and activities, and to enable the participation of different cultures in resilience.

AF8 Strategic Outcomes Model 2026-36

Ten year outcomes 2031-36	AF8 Roadshows 2033 and 2035 are designed and delivered.	Iwi / hapū representation embedded in the AF8 programme as partners.	Increased understanding of resilience options.	Influencing and informing resilience options.	A mature understanding on recovery assumptions to inform and test planning.	AF8 science and local science, and spatial planning are aligned.	Evaluating the programme against this outcome model and strategy.	
Five year outcomes 2027-2031	AF8 Roadshow 2029 and 2031 are designed and delivered.	Curriculum resources are maintained, expanded and delivered.	Public Readiness initiatives in progress.	Using AF8 Scenario as a ‘gateway’ to understanding and managing our other hazards (hazard agnostic approaches).	Cohesive readiness and response planning is supported by established knowledge sharing mechanisms and tools.	AF8 Recovery and reduction research and planning are advanced.	Connection between AF8 Science and local knowledge is enhanced.	A review of the SAFER Framework has been undertaken (to include recovery).
One year outcomes 2026-27	AF8 Roadshow 2027 is designed and delivered.	New projects and partnerships are scoped, framed and progressed.	The AF8 Programme Strategy 2026-36 is embedded across the AF8 Partner Network, and has been communicated widely.	AF8 website upgraded. AF8 digital channels and products are updated to reflect new strategy.	Outcomes and learnings from exercises are synthesised (eg. Rū Whenua).	Recovery and reduction research is underway.	Develop risk register for strategic reporting.	Monitoring and evaluation options for the lifespan of this strategy are scoped and implemented.
Outputs	The AF8 Roadshow every second year (2027 onwards).	Natural hazard, risk and readiness educational resources aligned to the NZ Curriculum.	New tools and resources to support public participation in community resilience.	AF8 website and digital media content and channels.	AF8 Research & Readiness Hub (ArcGIS), and AF8 Programme Hub (M365).	A strengthened partnership between science and emergency management.	Annual reporting with additional reporting for co-funders of specific projects.	
Activities	Delivering and participating in engagement activities e.g. webinars, forums, workshops, presentations, roadshows.	Co-designing tools and resources to enable and support public readiness and education.	Innovating and co-creating new approaches to risk communication and engagement.	Management and development of the AF8 website and other digital channels.	Translating technical information, integrating perspectives, and building trust to make knowledge accessible and relevant for different audiences.	Working with science and EM Group partners to translate research into practical outcomes.	Coordinating co-funding and sponsorship agreements and relationships with partners.	Programme monitoring, evaluation and reporting, for partners, funders and sponsors.
Inputs	EM Group and Science partner funding.	Contracted co-funding & sponsorship.	People (paid, in-kind, co-opted or co-funded).	Updated collaboration (or partnership) agreement.	Clearly defined roles of programme partners.	Updated steering group and governance structure.	The science e.g. AF8 Hazard Scenario and associated research.	The EM Act and associated reviews, NDRS, EM-SIP, policies and guidelines.