

## Data and facts

# Reliable Testing of Rotor Blades for the safe Operation of Wind Turbines

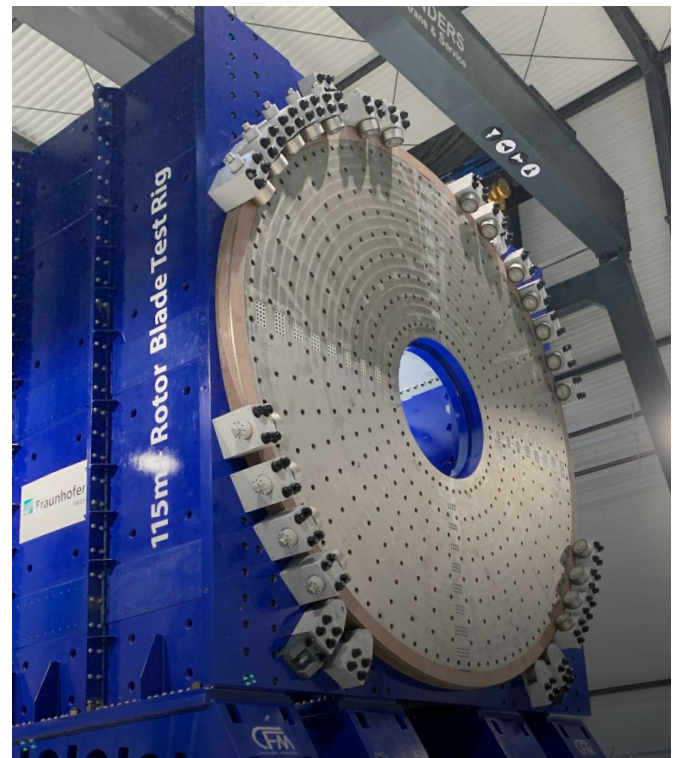
### Full-scale rotor blade testing

Mechanical testing remains an essential part of ensuring the reliable operation of rotor blades throughout the lifetime of 20+ years.

Since 2009, Fraunhofer IWES has performed more than 40 test campaigns for the certification of rotor blades. In addition to three full-scale test rigs, IWES operates an accredited material laboratory and offers the opportunity to perform segment and component tests of rotor blades.

### Our competences at a glance

- DIN EN ISO/IEC 17025-accredited laboratory for IEC 61400-23
- Recognized IECRE testing laboratory
- Ground-based excitation
- Variable test setup using combinations of hydraulic actuators, winches, and weights
- Model validation beyond certification: modal analysis, model update, torsional stiffness test
- Additional data acquisition (optional):
  - Digital image correlation (DIC)
  - Thermography
  - Acoustic emission
  - Optical deformation measurements
- Test set-up simulation and optimization



Max. root bending moment	70m rig	90m rig	115m+ rig
Static	50 MNm	115 MNm	160 MNm
Fatigue vertical	± 30 MNm	± 30 MNm	± 70 MNm
Fatigue horizontal	± 8 MNm	± 30 MNm	± 70 MNm

Our test rigs are conveniently located on the German coast with open sea access for transport.

## Test method development

Development and design of non-standard tests (e.g., biaxial or tests for unconventional blade designs) are essential parts of Fraunhofer IWES' research activities.

### Virtual test rig

With the continuing blade growth, the importance of test set up optimization is ever increasing. Fraunhofer IWES has developed ALBATROS – a validated numerical tool chain for test set-up optimization. This virtual test rig is continuously being improved and allows both the optimization of standard tests and the development of new test approaches.

### Biaxial test

Traditionally, flap and edge fatigue tests are performed separately. Combining both in a single test offers the potential to shorten the testing time and make the test more representative of field conditions. However, as blades are excited in (or close to) the natural frequency, the differences in frequencies between edge and flap direction lead to a chaotic displacement pattern of the blade tip.

In order to achieve 1:1 excitation, Fraunhofer IWES uses artificial springs and decoupled masses to tune system frequencies. Biaxial testing with elliptical (1:1) excitation has been successfully demonstrated and is available upon request within IEC 64100-23 certification tests.

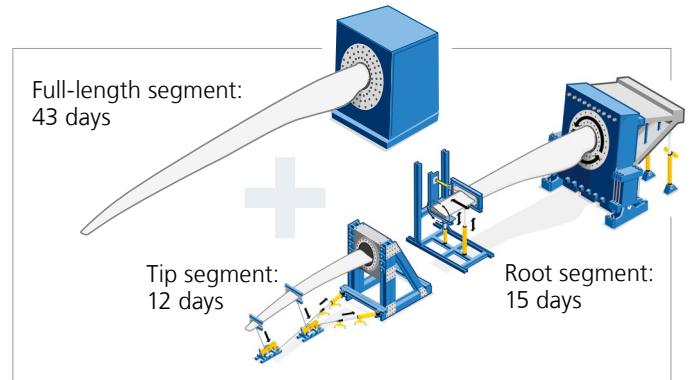


*Biaxial test fatigue setup with spring element and decoupled masses*

Segmented testing (i.e., splitting the blade into two tests) can be utilized in order to shorten the testing time. Using the virtual test rig environment, IWES has developed the sequential test method, which is based on a two-step approach.

First, the fatigue test is performed for a limited number of cycles on a full-scale blade. Subsequently, the blade is cut, and two additional fatigue tests are performed on the root and tip segments of the blade. This significantly shortens the testing time and reduces overloads. A case study for a 110m reference offshore blade has revealed that the testing time can be shortened by 65% and damage accumulation above targets can be reduced by 75%.

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*Sequential testing approach: full length blade test followed by two segment tests on the same specimen*

## Further information

Fraunhofer IWES secures investments in technological developments through validation, shortens innovation cycles, accelerates certification procedures, and increases planning accuracy by means of innovative measurement methods in the wind energy and hydrogen technology sectors. At present, there are more than 300 scientists and employees as well as more than 100 students employed at the nine sites: Bochum, Bremen, Bremerhaven, Leer, Görlitz, Hamburg, Hanover, Leuna and Oldenburg.

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## Contact

**Dr.-Ing. Steffen Czichon**  
Head of Department  
Rotor Blades  
Phone: +49 471 14290-383  
steffen.czichon@iwes.fraunhofer.de

**Gregor Basters**  
Group Manager Blade Testing  
Rotor Blades  
Phone: +49 471 14290-346  
gregor.basters@iwes.fraunhofer.de

Fraunhofer Institute for Wind Energy Systems IWES  
Am Seedeich 45, 27572 Bremerhaven, Germany  
www.iwes.fraunhofer.de