

Manufacturing and Certification of Composite Primary Structures for Civil and Military Aircrafts



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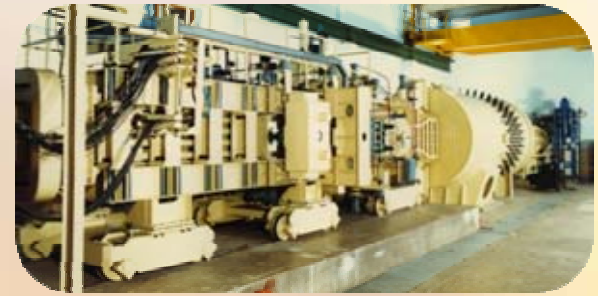
**ICAS Biennial Workshop on “Advanced Materials &
Manufacturing – Certification & Operational Challenges”**

**Stockholm, Sweden,
5th September 2011**

CSIR- NAL's Mission



- ★ Development of national strengths in aerospace sciences and technologies
Infrastructure, facilities and expertise
In-house, Grant-in-aid, Sponsored projects



- ★ Advanced technology solutions to national aerospace programmes
Fighter aircraft, gas turbine engines, defense systems, defense services, launch vehicles and satellites, space systems
Sponsored projects



- ★ Civil aeronautics development (since 1990s)
Design and development of small and medium-sized civil aircraft - Promote a vibrant Indian civil aviation industry
Government funding, Industry partnership



Core competence at NAL spans practically the whole aerospace sector

PROCESS
DEVELOPMENT

DESIGN
&
ANALYSIS

STRUCTURAL
TESTING

MANUFACTURING

NON-
DESTRUCTIVE
EVALUATION

CONCEPT TO CERTIFICATION

**NAL'S CORE
STRENGTH IN
COMPOSITES**

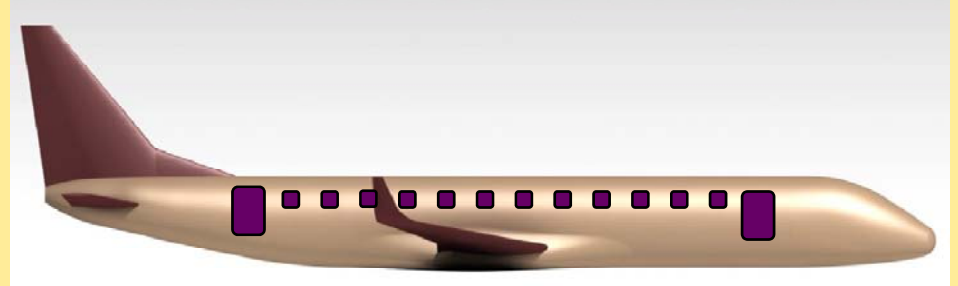
CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH

STRUCTURAL
REPAIR

ADVANCED
RESEARCH

STRUCTURAL
HEALTH
MONITORING

Evolution of Composites at NAL



90-110 Seater NCA



14 Seater SARAS

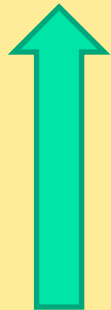


LCA- Tejas



2 Seater HANSA

Initial Development:
Bridge Deck Plates,
Radome Development,
DO-228 Rudder with
DLR Germany



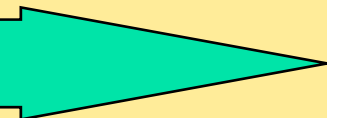
1980-90

1993

2001

2004

2017



NAL's HANSA, A Light All-Composite Trainer Aircraft

- ➔ Length overall : 25 ft (7.6m)
- ➔ Wing span : 34.35 ft (10.47m)
- ➔ Empty weight : 550 Kg
- ➔ All-up weight : 750 kg
- ➔ Usable fuel capacity : 85 litres

Two-bladed constant speed Hoffmann propeller of diameter 1730mm.



➔ Performance

- ➔ Stall speed with 20° flaps : 43 KIAS
- ➔ Max. cruise speed : 96 KIAS
- ➔ Max. rate of climb : 650 ft/min
- ➔ Endurance : 4 hours
- ➔ Landing distance : 1770 ft (540 m)
- ➔ Take-off distance : 1355 ft (415 m)

Rotax 914F3 (turbo charged engine with 100 BHP max. continuous power @ 5500 rpm)

Certified under
JAR-VLA in 2000

Advanced Technology Features



**HINGELESS
MAIN ROTOR**



**INTEGRATED
DYNAMIC SYSTEM**

**ARIS- 6 DEGREE
OF FREEDOM**



ADVANCED COCKPIT



**CRASHWORTHY
CREW SEATS**



**MODERN ENGINE
WITH FADEC**

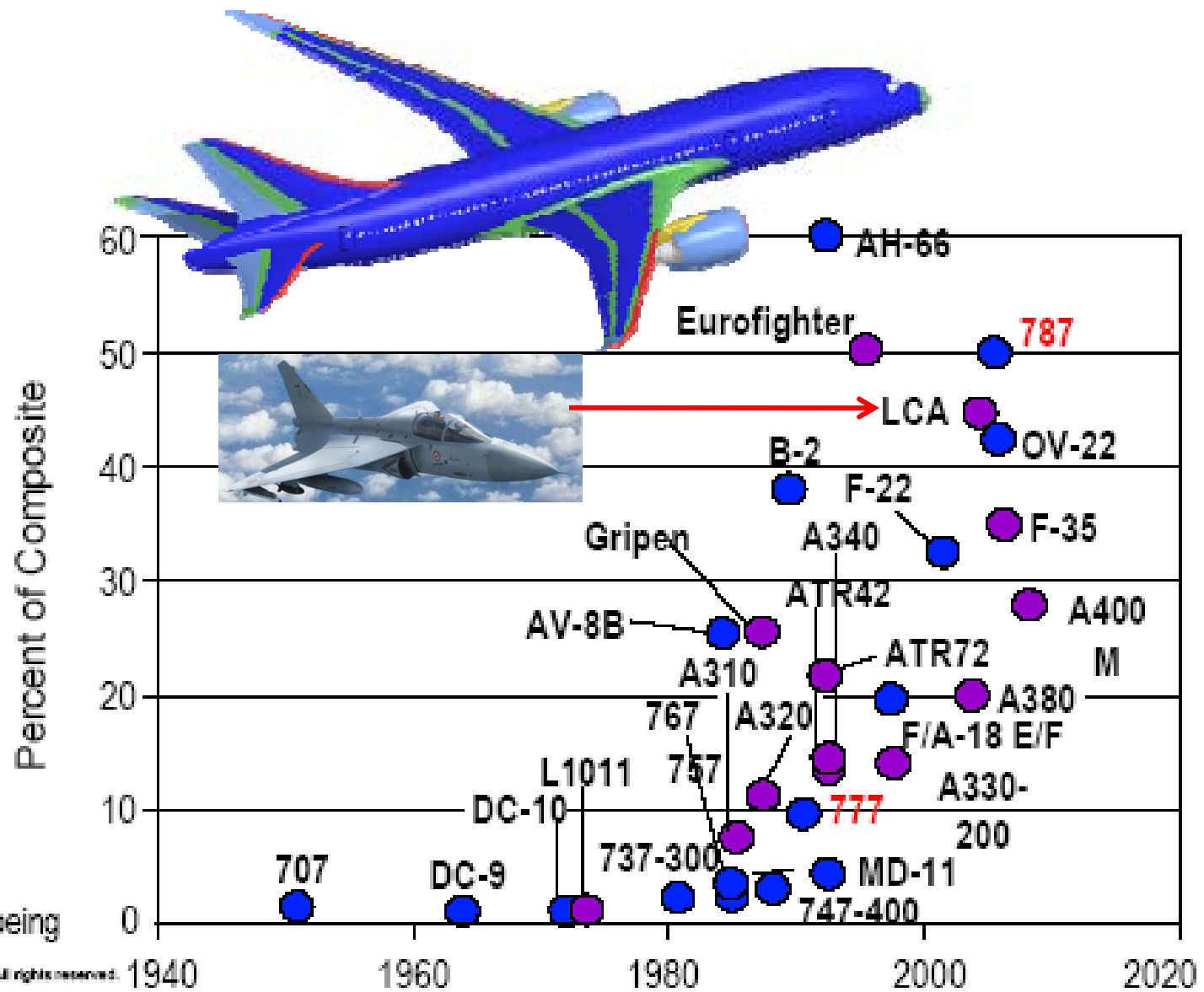


**BEARINGLESS
TAIL ROTOR**

**EXTENSIVE USE
OF COMPOSITES**



India makes it to Global Composites Scene with LCA- Tejas Program



Courtesy: Boeing

LCA - ROLES & SALIENT FEATURES

Air Defence Roles

- Point Intercept
- Escort
- Air Superiority

Offensive Air Support

- Close Air Support
- Interdiction

Maritime Reconnaissance and Strike



Operational Mass : 9000 Kgs

Max. Mach No. : 1.8

Max. War Load : 4500 Kgs

Max. Altitude : 15 Kms

TECHNOLOGIES

Unstable Configuration

- High Agility & Maneuverability
- Control laws
- Advanced Carefree Maneuverability

Advanced Materials (Composite Wing, Fin, Elevons, Fuselage, Rudder, Doors & Hatches)

- Reduced Weight
- Increased Life
- Reduced Signature

Digital Fly By Wire Flight Control System

Flat Rated Engine

- Easy Role Change



Advanced Avionics • Easy Role Change

Stealth

- RCS
- IR

Multi Mode Radar

- Advanced Sensors

Glass Cockpit

- Reduced Pilot Load

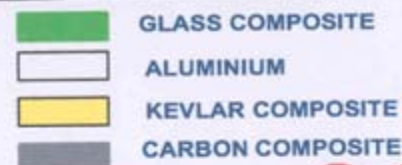
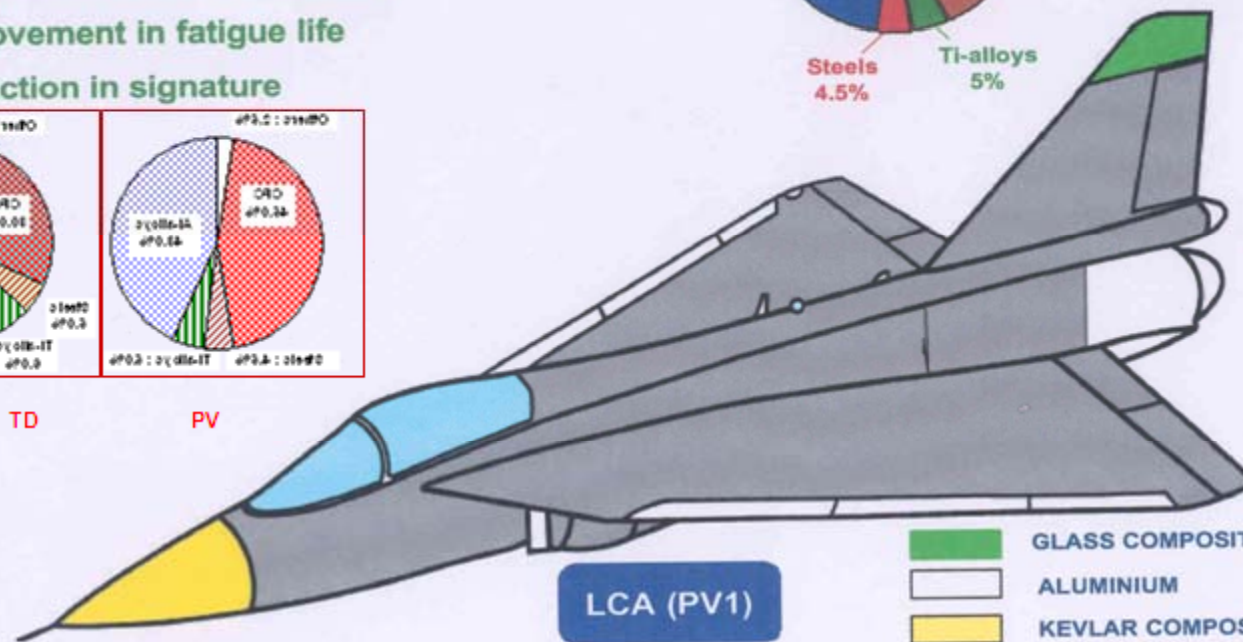
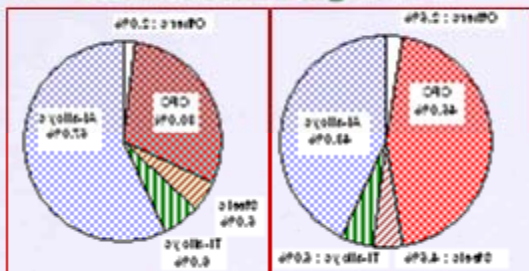
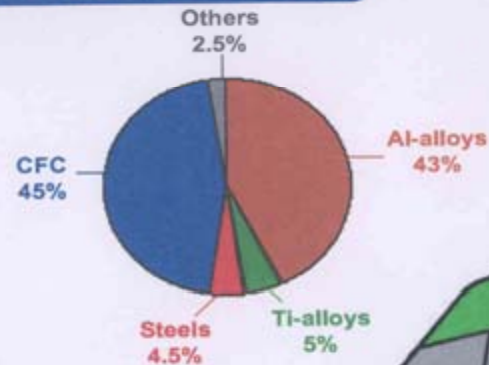
General Systems

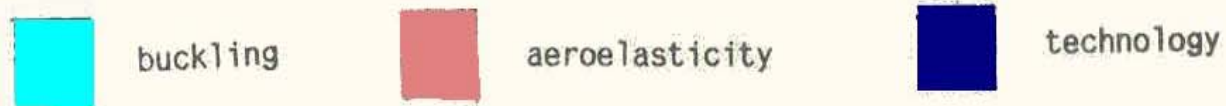
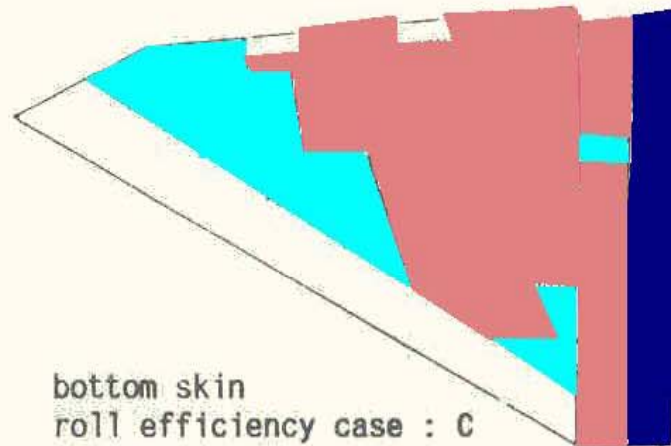
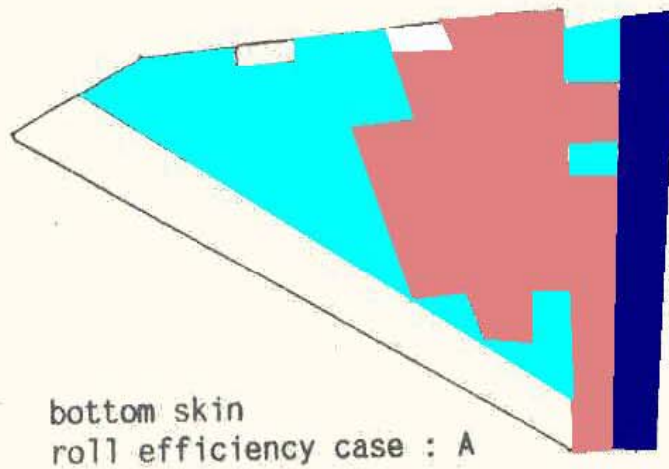
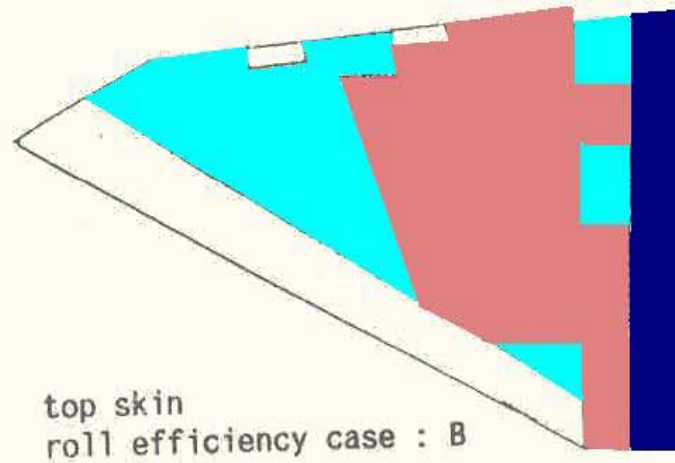
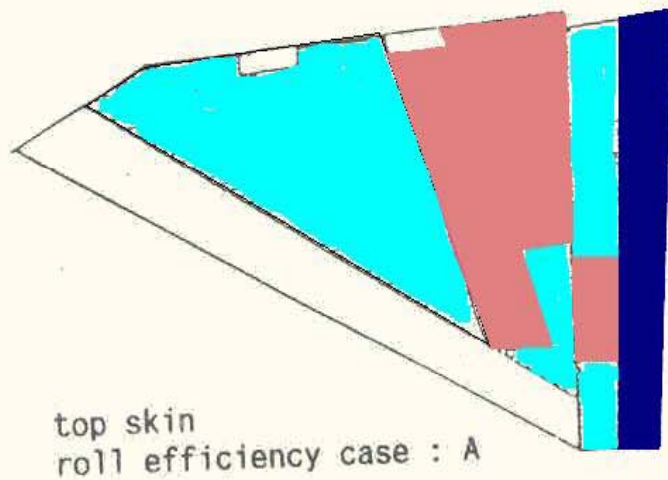
- Carbon brake disc
- 4000 PSI Hyd System
- ECS for tropical Climate
- Utility systems

Composites in the LCA Airframe

Use of composites in LCA Airframe

- ❖ Significant reduction in weight
- ❖ Significant reduction in part count
- ❖ Elimination of costly fasteners by using cobonded-cocured technology
- ❖ Improvement in fatigue life
- ❖ Reduction in signature

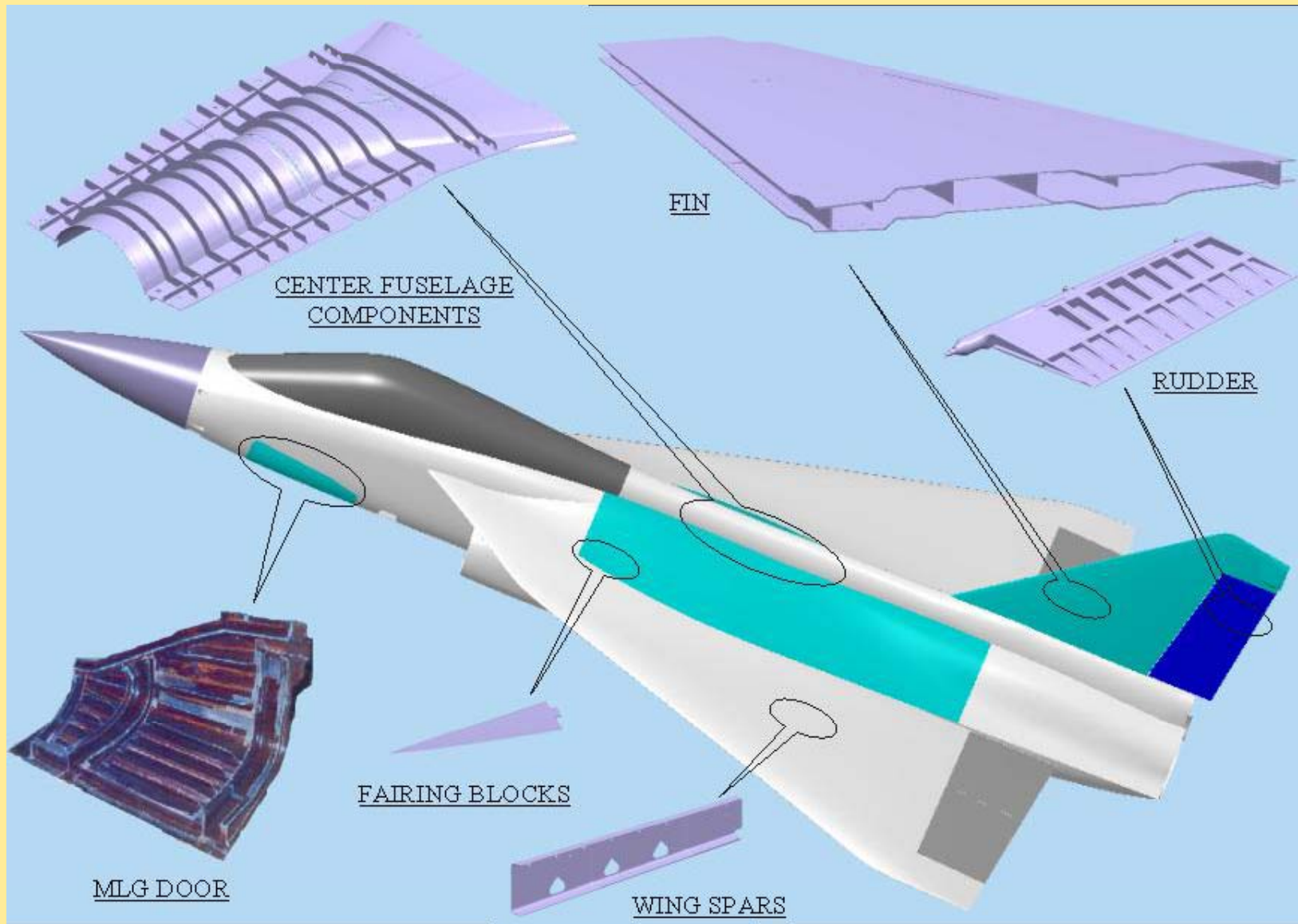




Optimisation constraint influence zones.

Structural Optimization of Composite Wing Skins for Stress, Buckling, Aeroelasticity and Technological Constraints

Composite Parts made for LCA-Tejas by NAL



45% by weight in composites

Benefits of Integration through Cocuring

CSIR-NAL has developed Cocuring technology
within the country for
Light Combat Aircraft (LCA-Tejas) and SARAS aircraft

- No holes- No stress concentration
- Increased stiffness of structure
- Better aerodynamic surface
- Reduced assembly time
- Weight saving
- No fuel leakage

NAL developed composites parts in LCA Tejas

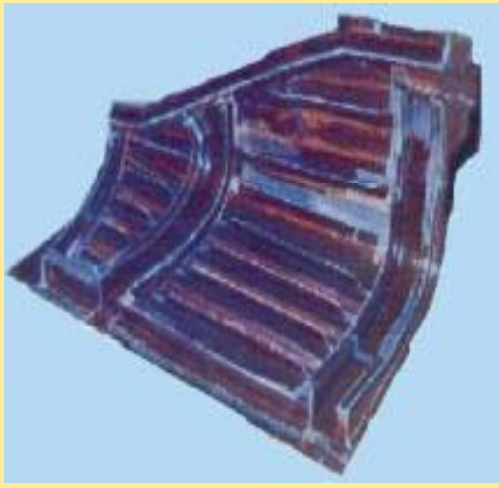


Fin



Fin inner details

- Integral rib-skin cocured construction
- Resulted in weight savings of 35 % and a 20% weight reduction in modified rudder
- Fabrication done using prepregs with a hybridization of tooling technologies like tape winding and dissolvable core technology
- Cost reduced by about 30 %



MLG Door

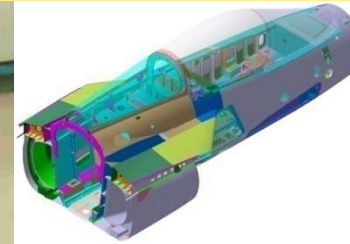
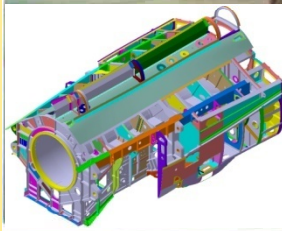
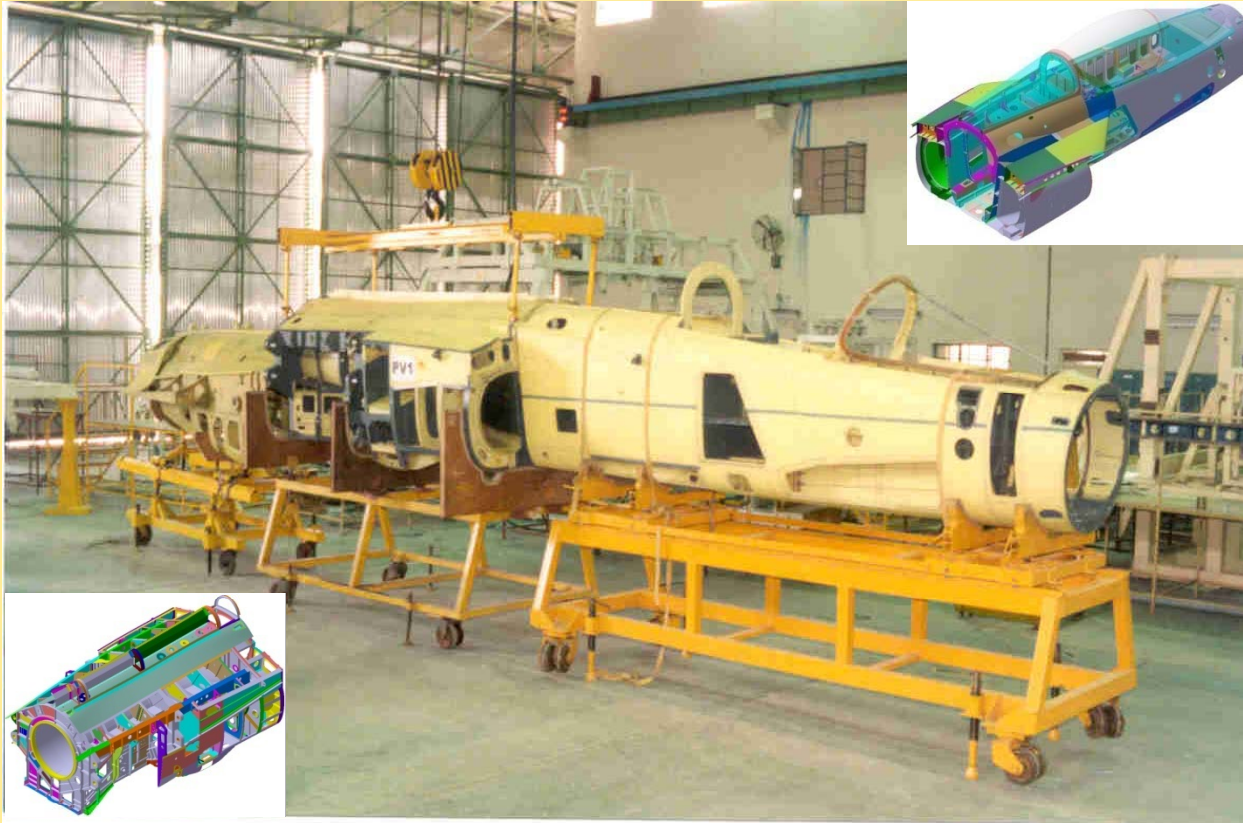


Rudder



Torque shaft

NAL developed composites parts in LCA Tejas



Fuselage Top Skin



Air Channel Dividing Wall



Co-cured CFC Circular Duct

LCA CFC Wing Assembly



TEST FACILITIES DEVELOPED FOR LCA



Composite Lay-up Shop



Autoclave



C-Scan



Lightning test rig



Structural Coupling Test

Test
Facilities



Main Airframe Static Test



Ground Vibration Test



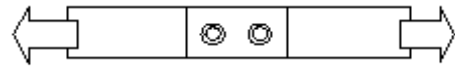
Half Wing Test



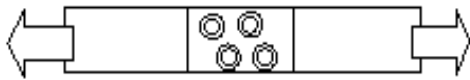
Full Aircraft Test

Feature Level Testing for LCA

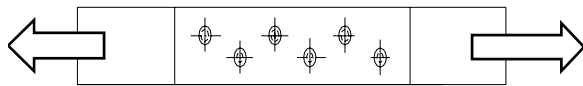
- Fatigue testing for 5 life cycle
- Environmental aging
- Static testing under Hot Wet



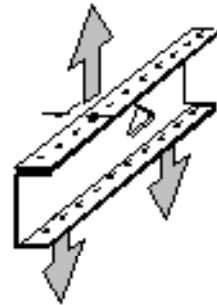
CFC-CFC joint



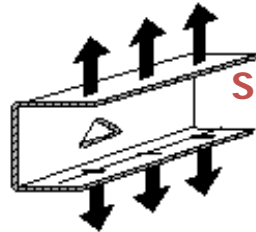
CFC-Metal joint I



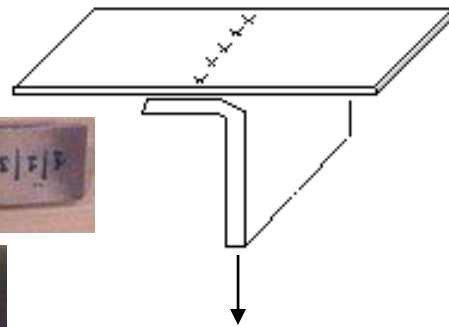
CFC-Metal joint II



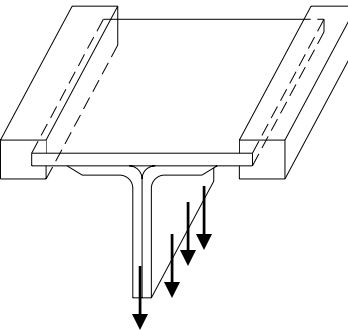
Spar-3 pt. bending



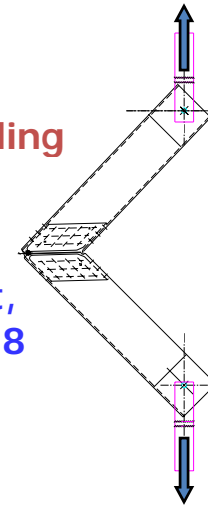
Spar opening



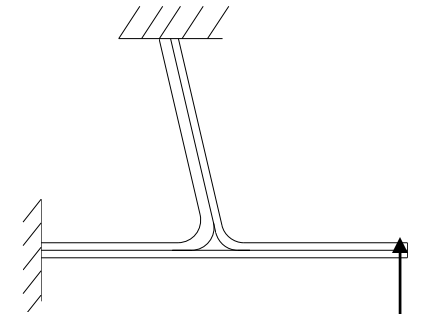
Skin-Spar Joint



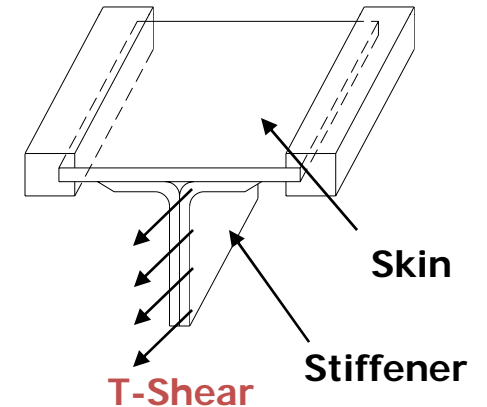
T-



L-Joint, BLK#18



Y-Joint, Circular Duct

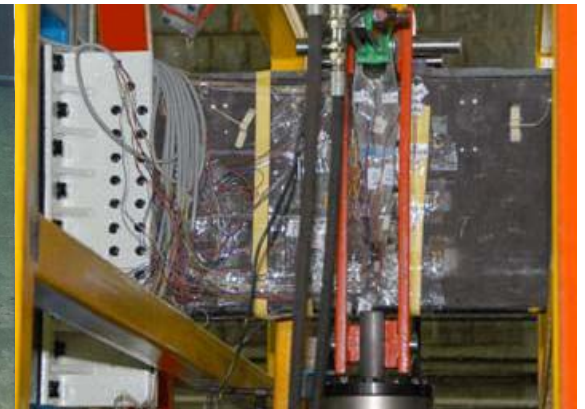
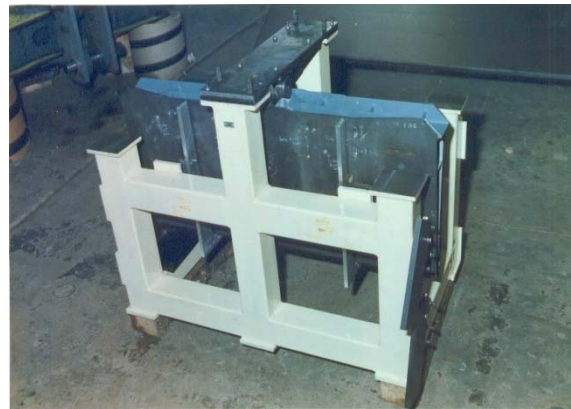
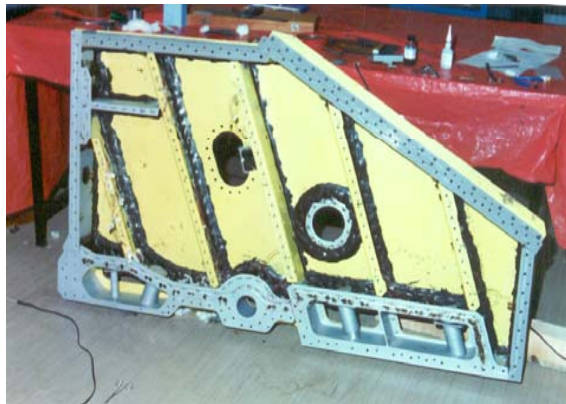


T-Shear



WING ROOT FITTING BOX - DRY ASSEMBLY & FINAL ASSEMBLY

WING BUCKLING TEST BOX



WING FUEL TANK SEALING TEST BOX

O/B Elevon test box

- Fatigue and burst pressure testing of Drop Tank Nose cone



Testing of LCA Wing



- FLEXIBLE TEST RIG TO SIMULATE STIFFNESS EFFECTS
- ISOSTATIC EQUILIBRIUM SYSTEM
- INSTRUMENTED REACTIONS
- SIMULTANEOUS EXTERNAL & REACTION LOADING

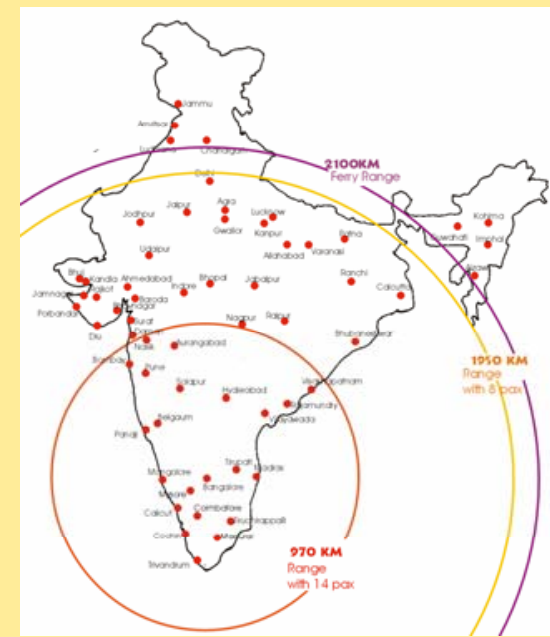
Development of a Light Transport Aircraft

14 seater multi-role LTA - SARAS

- Hybrid (metal + composite) airframe
- CFC flaps, control surfaces, fairings
- P&WC PT6A-67A turbo-prop engine
 - 1200 SHP
- 2.65φ (5 bladed) constant speed propeller

- Max. cruise speed : 550 km / h
- Max. cruise altitude : 9 km
- Max. R/C, ISA, SL : 700 m / min.
- Endurance : ~ 5h
- T.O. distance, ISA, SL : 700 m
- Landing distance, ISA, SL : 850 m

Design to meet FAR-23 requirements

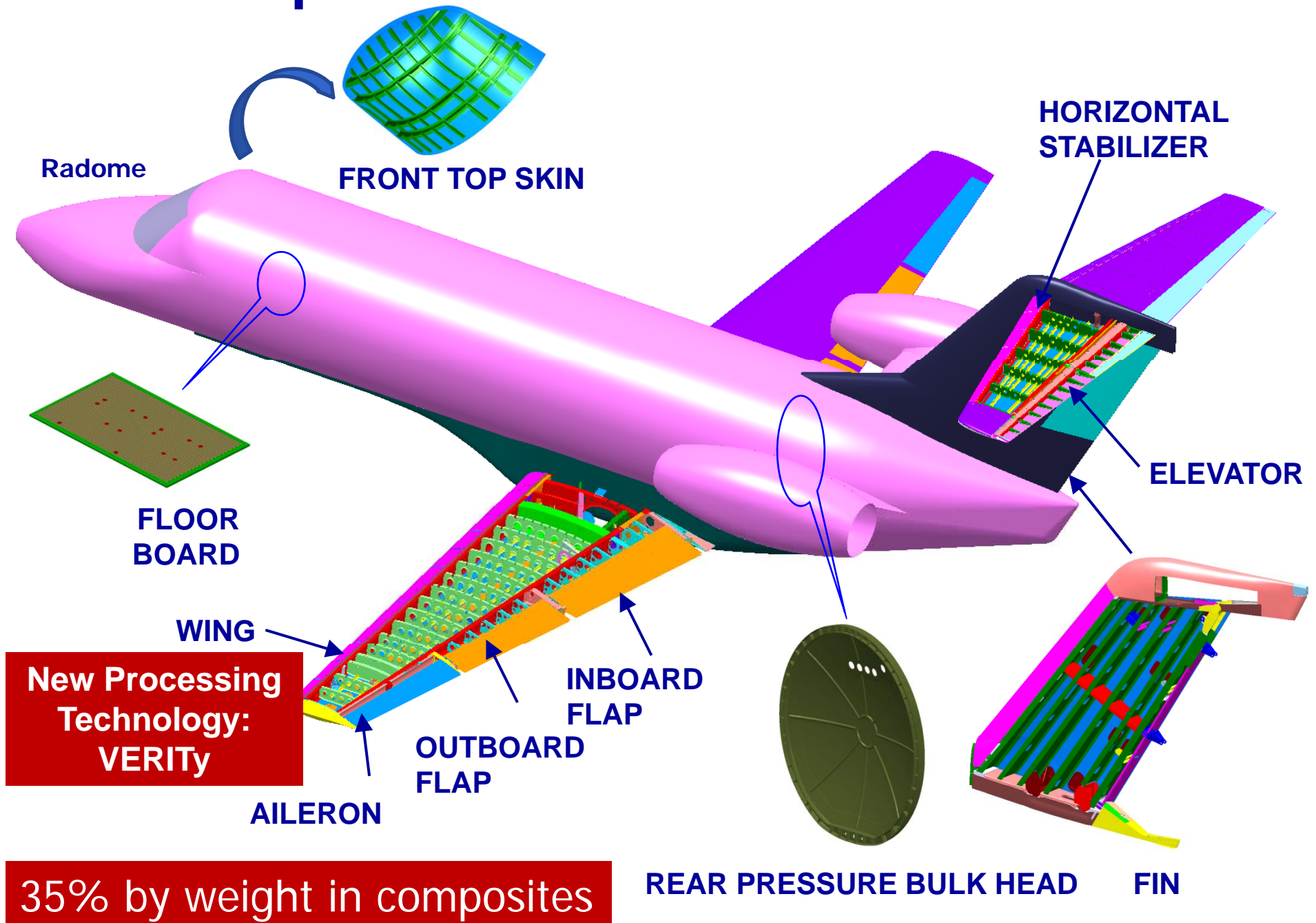


Materials used for LCA and SARAS programmes

1. **AS4/914 Prepreg materials from Hexcel composites Pvt Ltd; 180 deg C curing systems; Dry T_g = 175 deg C**
2. **Unidirectional fabric from Hexcel Composites and Resin from Axson France for the VERITy process; 80 deg C cure followed by 180 deg C post cure: Dry T_g of 145 deg C**
3. **Rohacell foam for stringers and access covers**

VERITy process mechanical properties within 2 % of prepreg properties

Composite Parts in SARAS Aircraft



HT Components of SARAS



Cocured Inter Spar Box with Bottom Skin With 2 Spars, 11 Ribs, 7 Stringers



Cocured Top Skin with Stringers

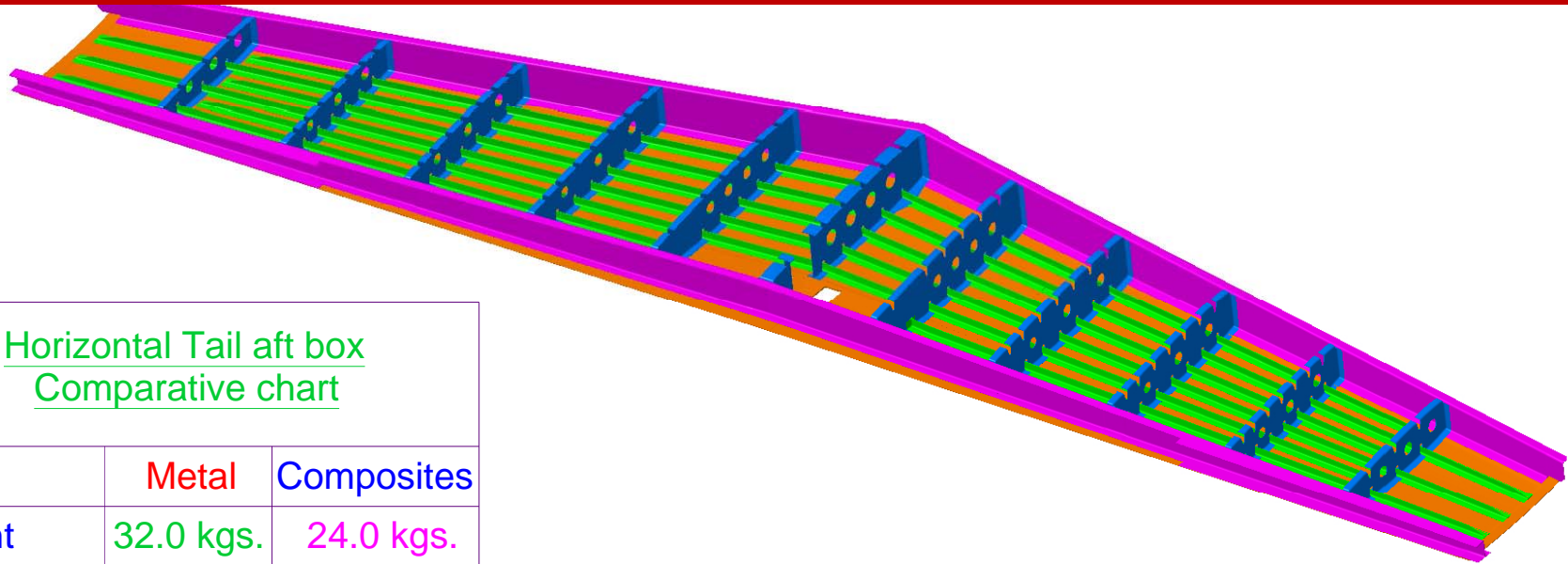
Size: 5.5mx 1m



HT Tip Cocured with Stringers

	Metal	Composite
Weight	92 Kg	70 Kg (24%)
No. of parts	243	11
No. of Fasteners	10,500	2900

Horizontal Tail of SARAS: Cocured Bottom Section



Horizontal Tail aft box
Comparative chart

	Metal	Composites
Weight	32.0 kgs.	24.0 kgs.
No. of parts	75	1
No. of fasteners	5200	Nil
Assembly	4 weeks	Nil

Dimensions: 5.5mx1m. The skin is cocured with stringers, ribs and spars.



Tooling Concepts



Basic outer CFC Mould



Internal Flexible tools



Skin stringer Integration



Skin stringer spar Integration



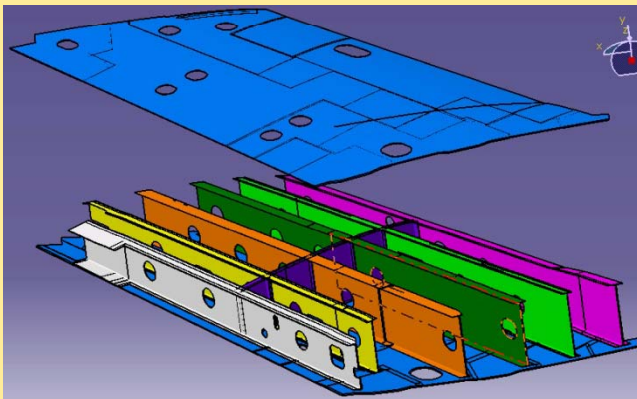
Final bag for curing

Vertical Tail of SARAS



Cocured Inter Spar Box with 6 Spars and a Mid Rib

Size: 2.8mx1.8m



	Metal	Composite
Weight of IS Box	65 Kg	<u>50 Kg</u> (23%)
No. of parts	130	01
No. of Fasteners	1100	0
Total VT weight	126 Kg	101Kg (20%)

Master Model For Mould



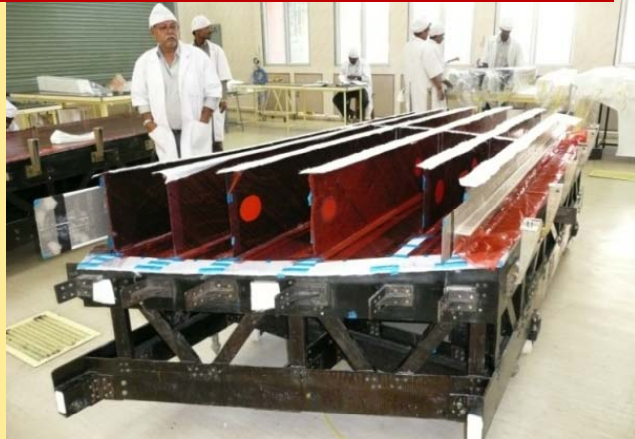
Rh & LH Mould Assembly



Cured Component



Skin Bonded With Spars & Mid Ribs

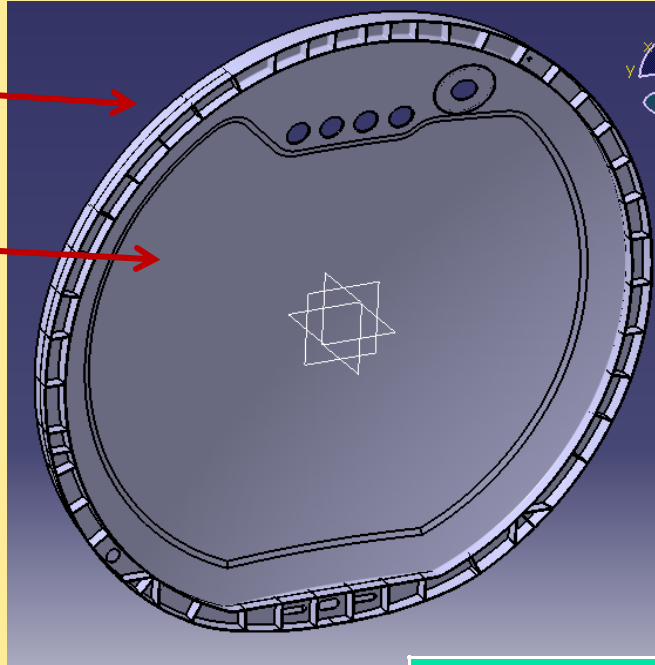


Final Bagging for Curing



Cocured CFC Pressure Bulkhead of SARAS

Ring
Dome shaped rear wall



1.8 m diameter dome having a depth of 175 mm, with thickness varying from 1.2 to 3.00 mm

Accuracy of outer contour and gusset spacing = ± 0.5 mm



	Metal	Composite
Weight	34 Kg	17 Kg (50%)
No. of Fasteners	700	0

All the above were fabricated using Prepregs and Autoclave Moulding Technology

Challenge: How to cut costs???

One solution- Liquid Moulding Technology

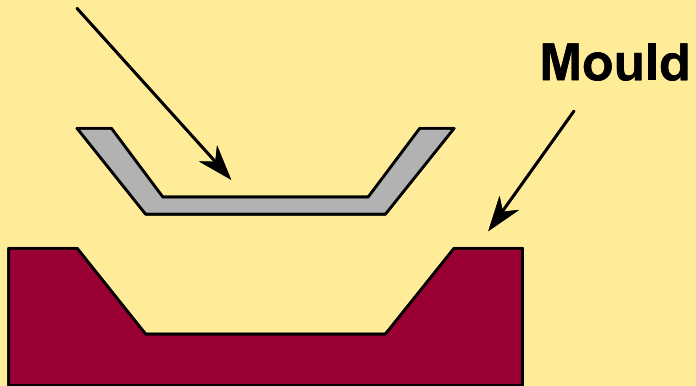
LCM and its Variants

- RTM (Resin transfer moulding)
- RIM (Resin injection moulding)
- VARTM (vacuum assisted resin transfer moulding)
 - SCRIMP (Seeman composite resin infusion moulding process)
 - DCVRTM (Double chamber vacuum resin transfer moulding)
 - FASTRAC (Fast remotely activated channels)
- RFI (Resin Film Infusion)
- SRIM (Structural reaction injection moulding)

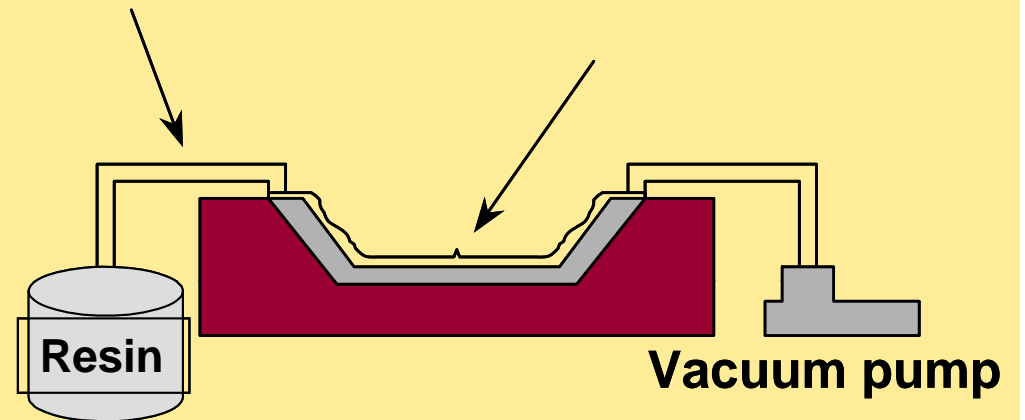
VERITy (Vacuum enhanced resin infusion technology)
Developed by NAL

VERITy Process

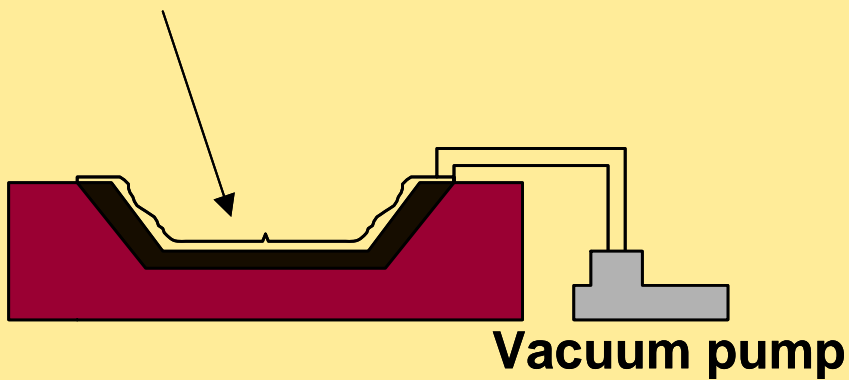
Reinforcement



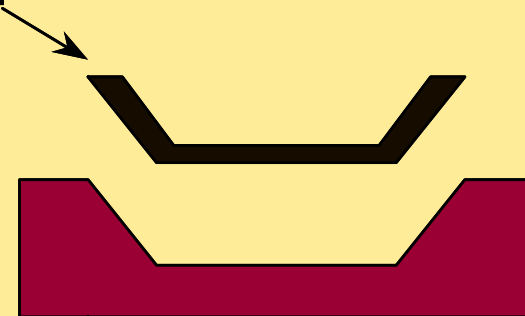
Resin infusion



Consolidation Under 1 Bar External Pressure and Vacuum

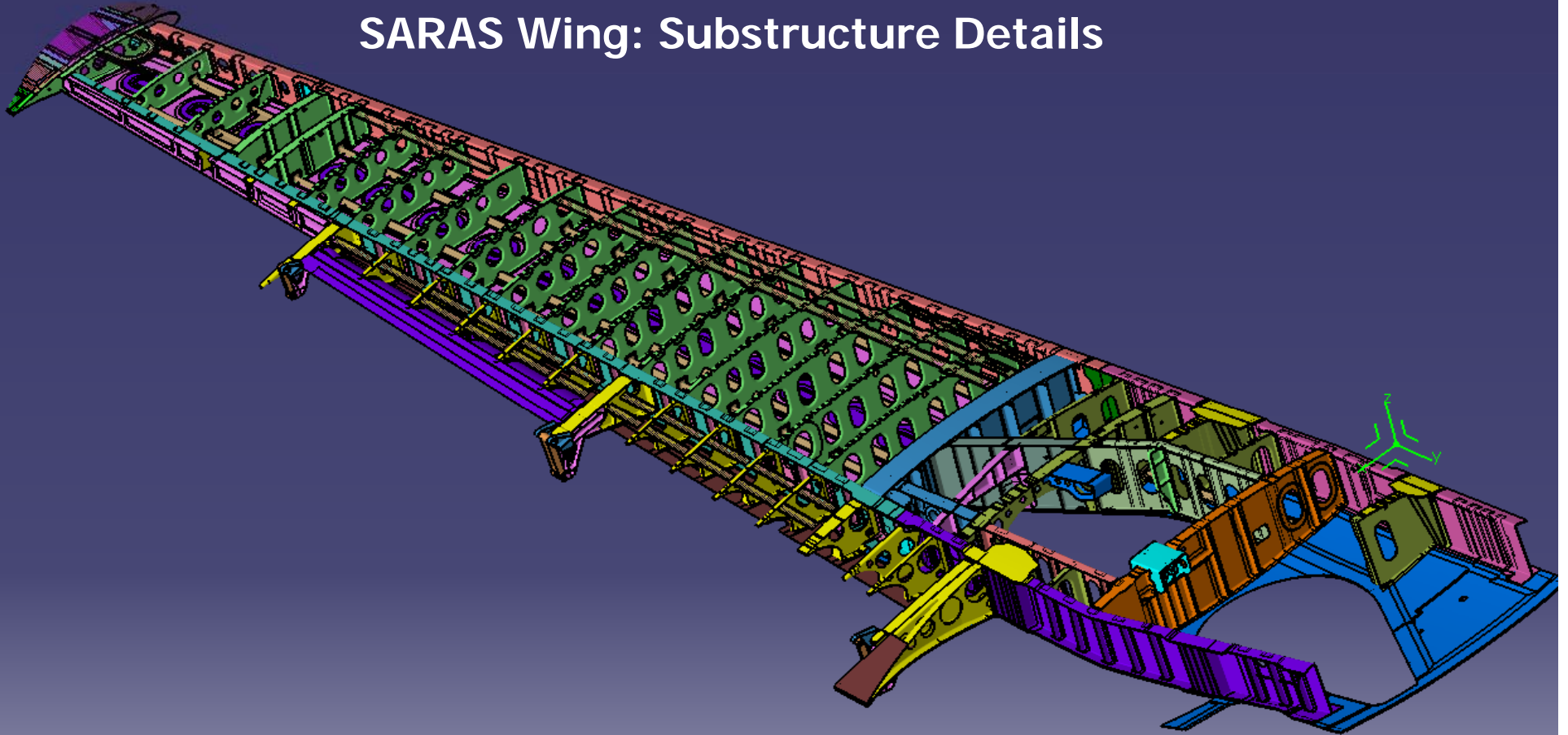


Cured part

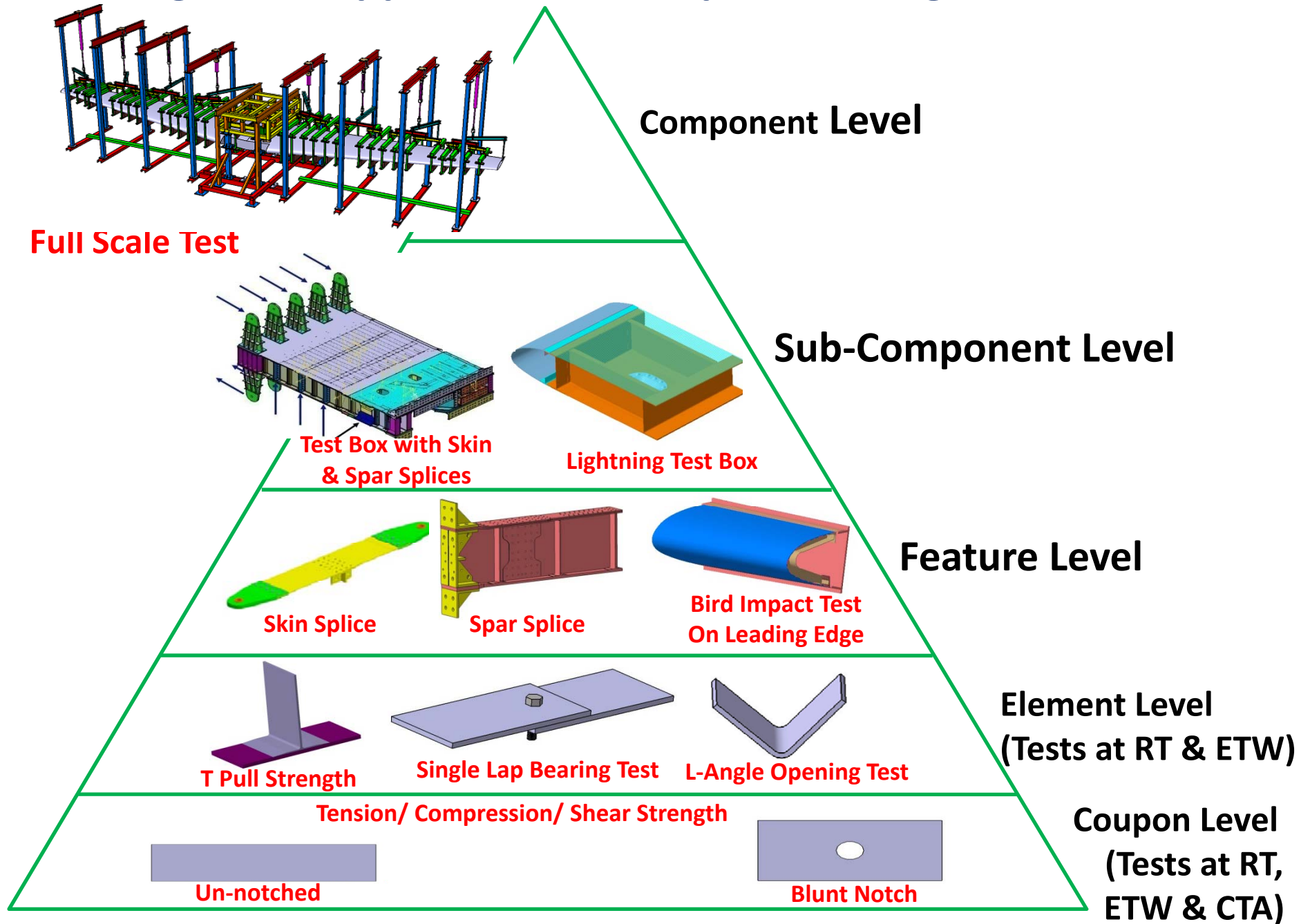


Development of Integrated Wing Structures at NAL using VERITy Process

SARAS Wing: Substructure Details

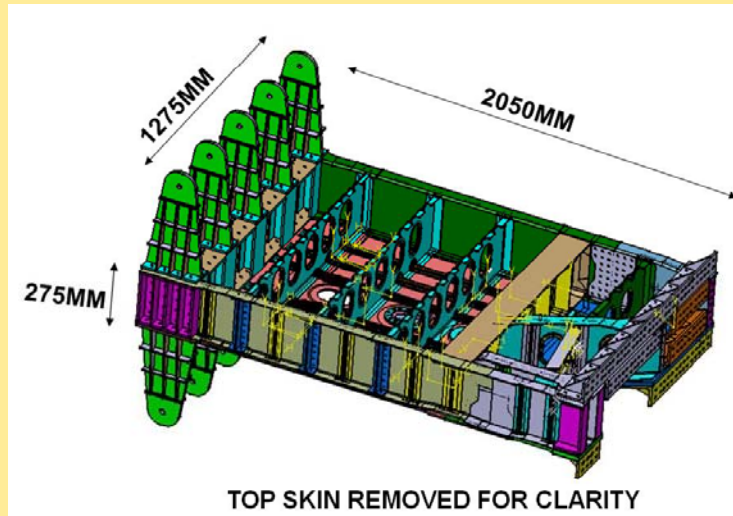


Building Block Approach for Composite Wing of SARAS Aircraft



Box Level Studies using VERITY : SARAS Wing Test Box

Structural Details of Wing Test Box



Cocured bottom box

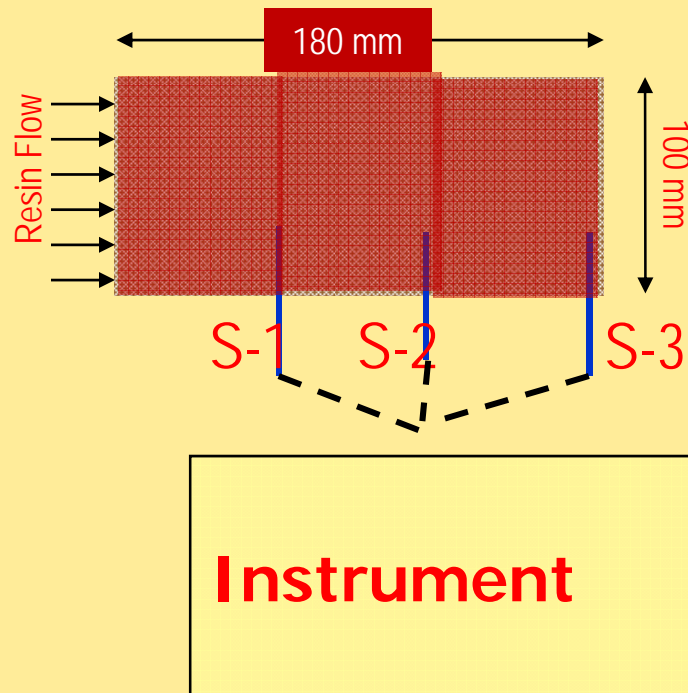


Assembled box undergoing Static Testing



Flow Sensor Development

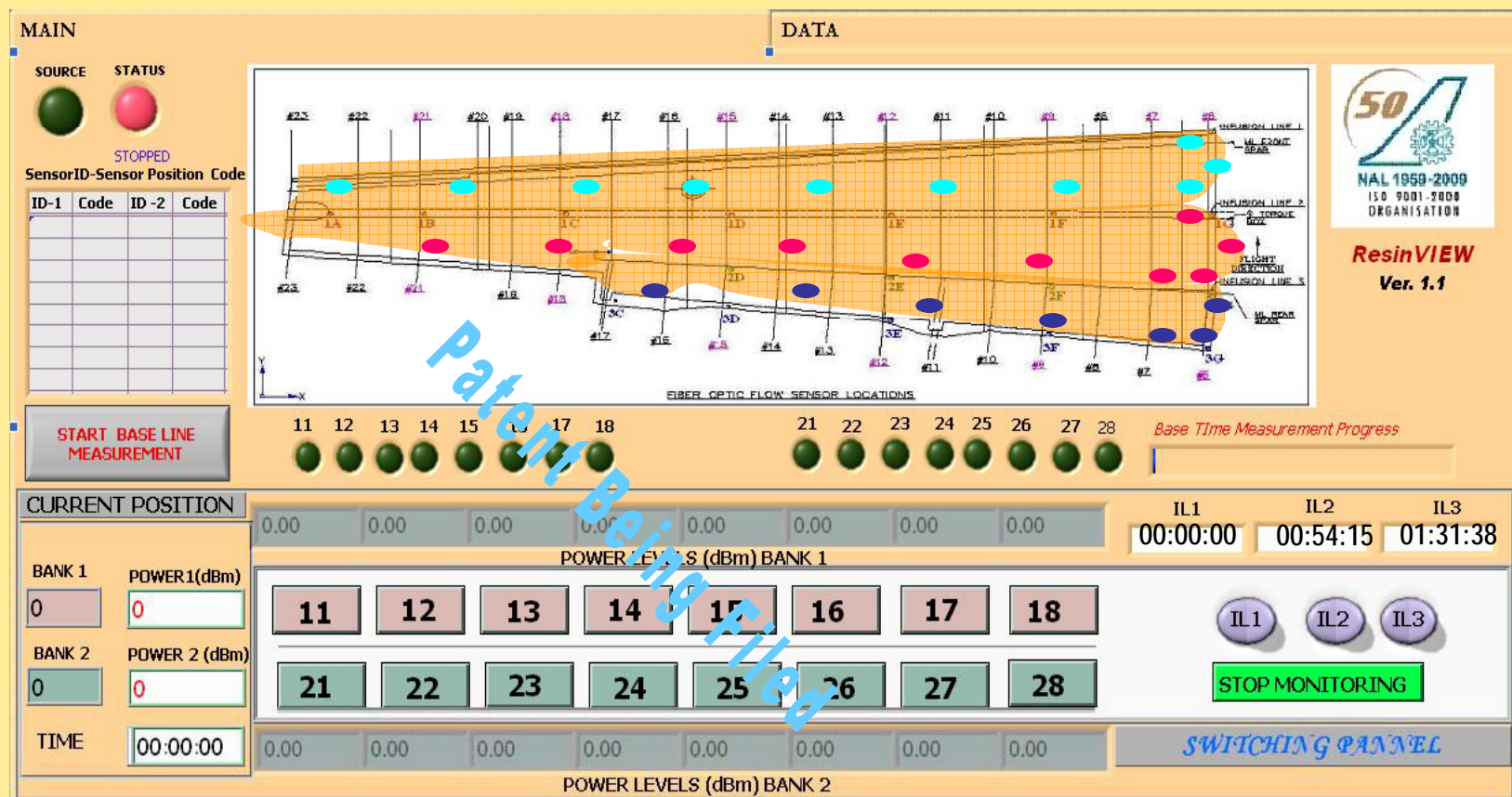
Fibre Optic Flow Sensor



Process	Sensor - 1	Sensor - 2	Sensor - 3
After Embedment	a	a	a
Before Infusion	b	b	b
Resin crossed Sensor - 1	c	b	b
Resin crossed Sensor - 2	c	c	b
Resin crossed Sensor - 3	c	c	c

ResinVIEW Software Development

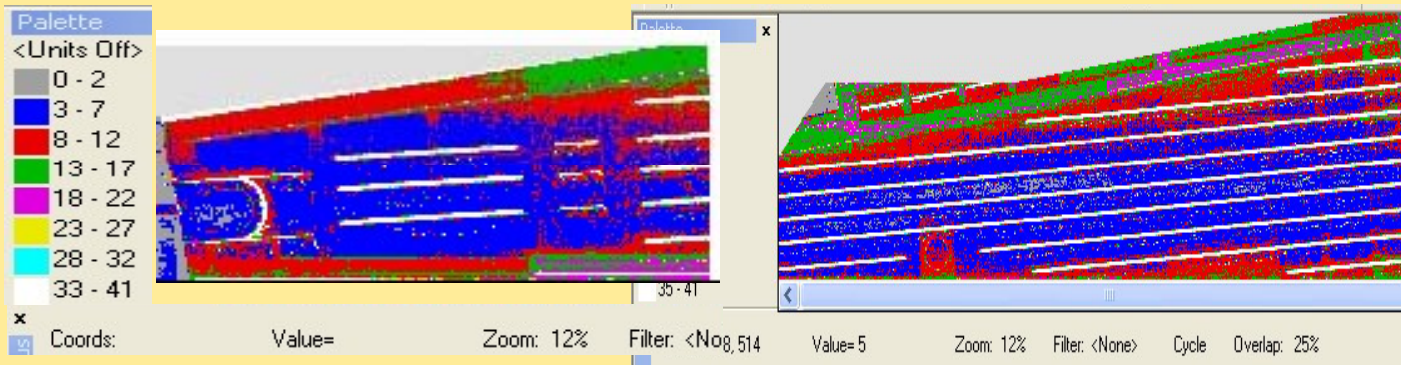
- LabVIEW & MATLAB based modular code development for real time resin flow.
- Enables sequential infusion based on *NetSense* feedback.
- Resin arrival time information important for future infusion strategy and modeling.
- Low cost reusable sensor & modular open system architecture system.



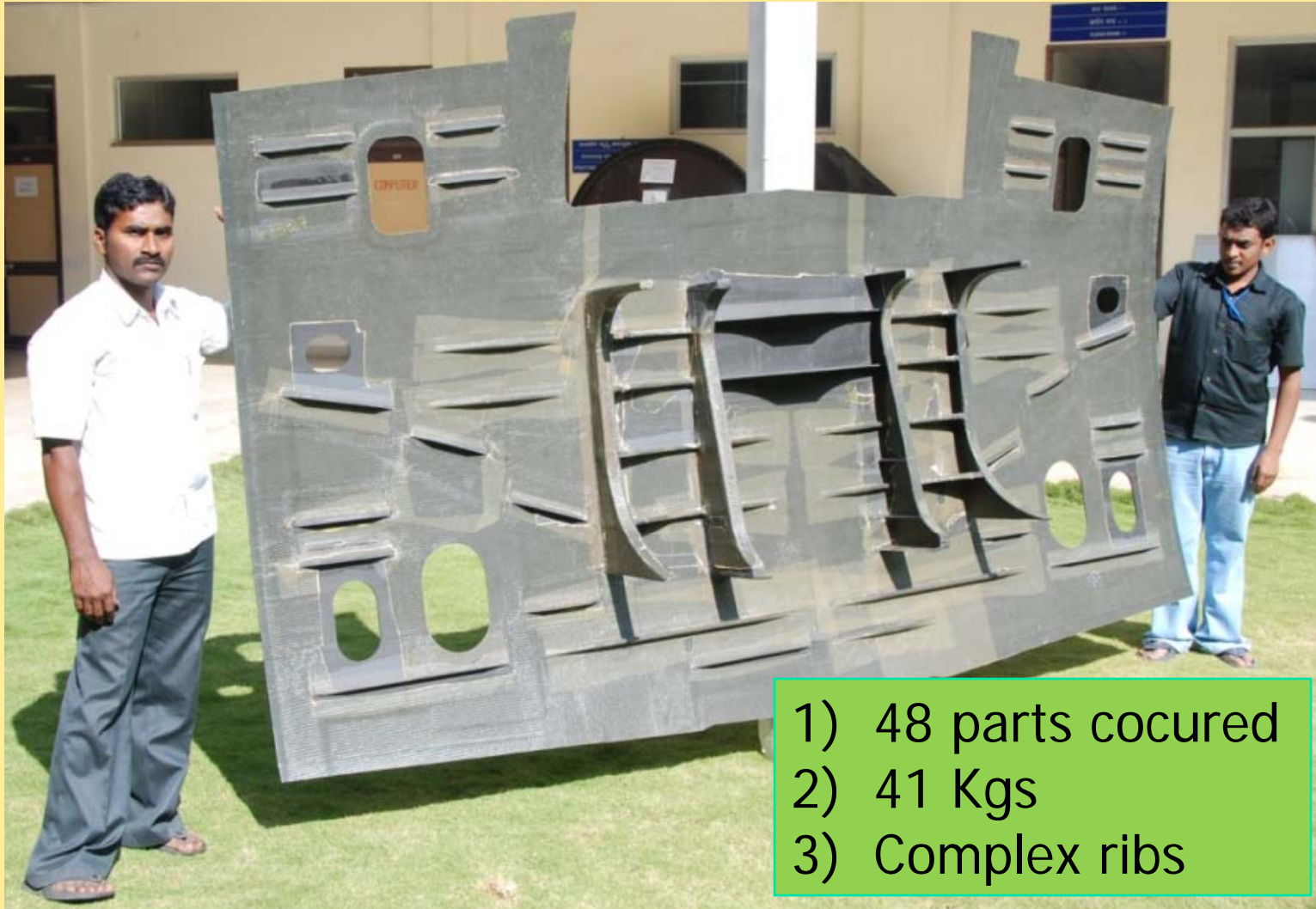
SARAS Wing Components made using VERITY



Thickness varies from 1.7 mm to 8.6 mm
Thickness of hat stringer is 1.36 mm



Centre Top Skin



- 1) 48 parts cocured
- 2) 41 Kgs
- 3) Complex ribs

SARAS Outboard Wing: Integrated Wing Concepts Cocured Coinfused Wing Bottom Skin with Substructure



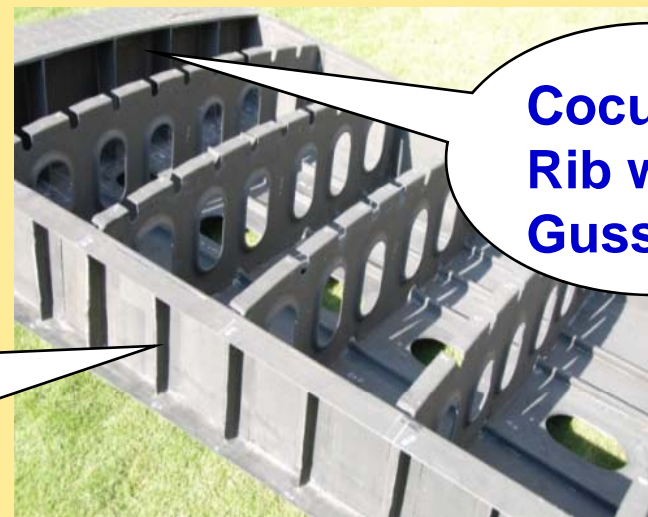
**Cocured
Ribs and
Stringers**

**@ 300 parts
Cocured in
one shot**

**Cocured
Spar with
Gussets**



**Cocured
Rib with
Gussets**



Tool Design

Infusion Strategy

- Infusion strategy plays a key role, especially in components where the thickness and geometry of a component varies from section to section and a lot of features are to be co-cured.
- In large structures, sequential and/or parallel infusion strategies need to be employed, as there is a limited time available to complete the infusion.

Vacuum Bagging Technology

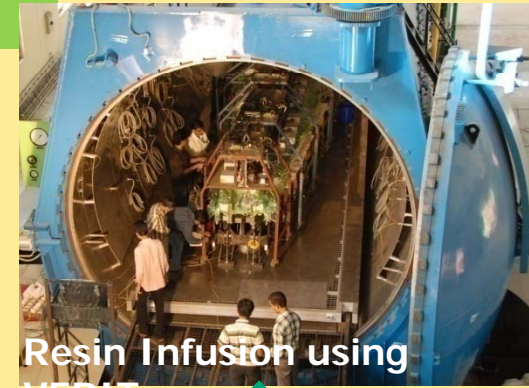
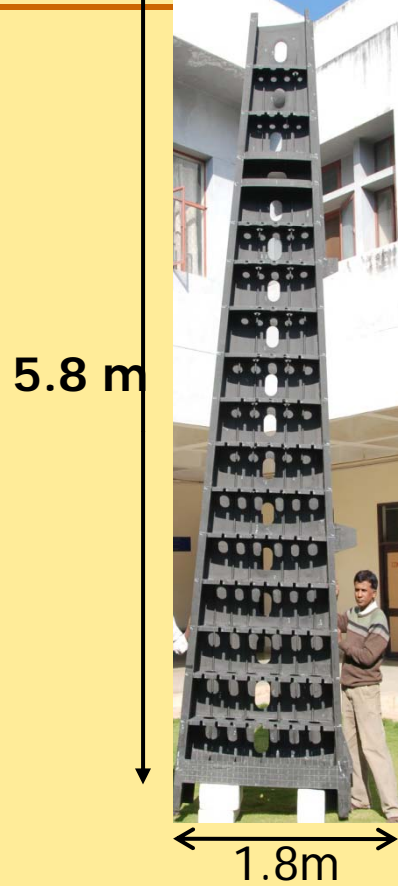
- This is yet another aspect that needs to be dealt with in order to get a complex co cured component that meets the required specifications of compaction and dimensions.
- Care has to be taken to avoid any 'Bridging' at the radius and proper vacuum communication needs to be maintained throughout the cure of the component to ensure proper consolidation of the part.

Fabrication Methodology

Cocured Component



Finished Master Model



Trial Assembly of Wing



Manufacturing & Assembly Issues

- 1) Tool corrections for spring forward behaviour of composites is trial and error method and difficult for complex composite parts.
- 2) Thickness growth -2% to +8% in composites are lead to assembly fitment problems.
- 3) Maintaining the fiber direction during the lay up of complex component is difficult issue.
- 4) Out of plane loads are important when laminate is assembled with mechanical fasteners. If fastener pulling forces are too high, Composites experience delaminate & possible loss of structural integrity.
- 5) Presence of ply drops ,lap joints (BD Composites) and their variability in thickness results in higher thickness shim when mating with machined metallic members during the assembly.

Operational Issues with composite Structure

- 1) Removal of Panels: As composite have low wear resistance as compared to metal ,holes are elongating as panels are removed frequently. In case of fuel tanks, fuel is leaks due to this elongates. Remedial: Use metallic sleeves/bushes for these holes**
- 2) Delaminations are occurring during drilling & other machining operations even for minor deviation in the process like improper support during drilling and direct drilling of higher diameter holes.**
- 3) As composites are brittle , even minor deviations in the contour is difficult during assembly.**
- 4) The inspection time required for composite structures is more as compared to metallic structures. It is difficult to inspect the delamination/damages other than through the ultrasonic inspection. Some impact damage are noticed only during schedule maintenance period.**

Operational Issues with composite Structure *Contd...*

- 5) More precautions have to taken while walking on composite parts like wing as it leads to delamination/ debonding when there is local hard points.**
- 6) Edge damages are occurs frequently when composites doors/panel are removed from the aircraft & during installation.**
- 7) Fuel leaks are occurring during the service (1-2 years) due to resin starvation zones even though it is cleaned structurally.**
- 8) Modification of composite structures due to operation requirements like installation of new equipments etc, is difficult as compared to metal.**



Damage Tolerance Studies towards certification

Aspects

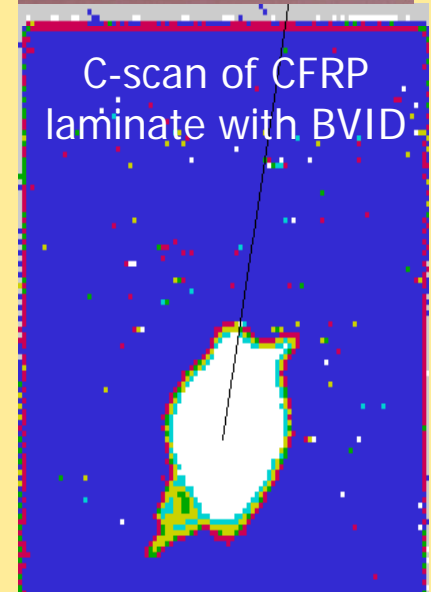
- **Damage threats & classification**
- **Aspects of damage tolerant design**
- **Airworthiness requirements**
- **Structure substantiation**
 - **Building block approach**
 - **Test Sequence/Protocol**

Damage Threats

- Processing anomalies and in-process handling damages
- In-service damages: E.g. Tool drops, ground vehicle impacts, bird strikes, runway debris, uncontained engine rotor failure etc.
- Environmental damages: E.g. Hail, Lightning strike, Moisture ingress, UV radiation etc.
- IATA survey: Ground handling and moisture intrusion are most common sources of damage

Damage classification

- **Barely visible impact damage (BVID)**
 - Small damages that may not be found during inspection
 - Typical dent depth 0.5 to 1 mm
- **Visible impact damage (VID) and penetrations**
- **Scratches, gouges, surface and coating inspections**
- **Fluid and moisture ingress**
- **Delamination, debonds etc.**
- **Thermal damage; Chemical damage; Others**



Why should we care about impact damage?

- Laminated composites have very low shear strength, hence are susceptible to impact damage
- Invisible internal delamination and BVID are most detrimental and leads to low allowable load/strain in design
- Impact damage is accommodated by limiting the design strain – leading to significant conservativeness
- Safety & economical reasons – damage has to be detected and repaired during inspection and maintenance

Typical Energy Levels for Projectile Impact

Description	Energy (J)	Mass (g)	Velocity (m/s)	Circumstances
tool drop	6	330	6 ⁺	Maintenance work
removable element drop	4	220	6 ⁺	Cargo handling
maintenance component	16	910	6 ⁺	Maintenance work
hail (up to 51 mm diameter)	43	62	37.3	Take-off and landing, flight, taxiing
bird strike	3.8-81 (kJ)	1800	65-300	Take-off and landing, flight
runway debris	2-40	9	20-94	Take-off and landing, flight, taxiing
concentrated load	50	-	Static	Maintenance, cargo handling

Courtesy: Impact on aircraft, Marcílio Alves et.al.

Aspects of Damage Tolerant Design

- **Residual strength capability**
 - Residual strength of several damage scenarios to be demonstrated after application of repeated loading
- **Damage growth characterization**
 - “No initiation – No growth” approach is usually adopted
- **Usual design practices**
 - Multiple/Redundant load paths
 - Materials with slow crack growth rates
 - Design for good inspectability

Development of Composite Structural Repairs & Validation

- Design, Fabrication, Testing and Validation of Composite Repair Schemes

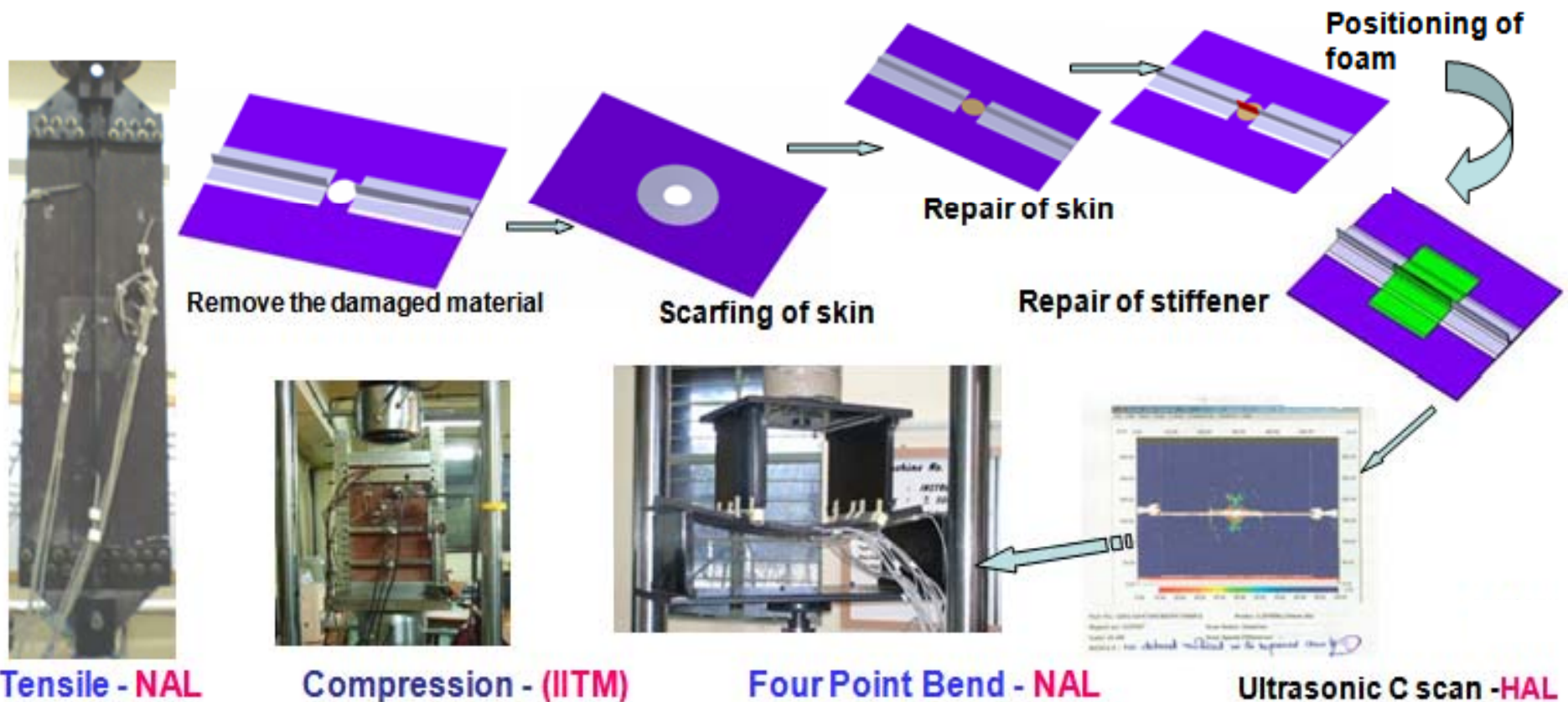
6 types of composite materials & 4 types of adhesives tested at RT & HTW

15 Types of repairs on Monolithic, Stiffened and Sandwich structures

Specimens tested: 400 Nos

Panels tested: 55 Nos

Repair & Testing of CFC T-Stiffened Panel



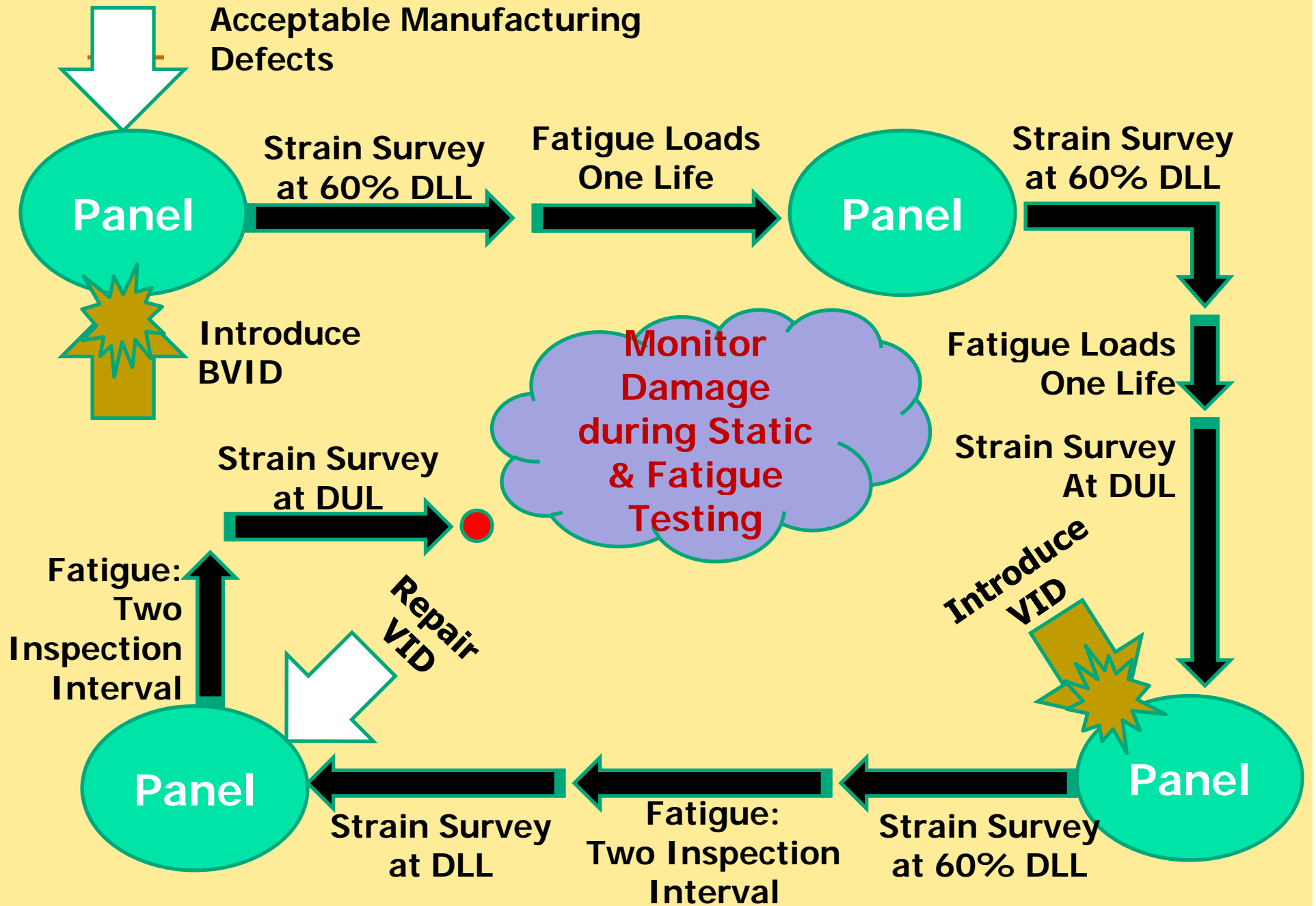
Civil Aviation Authorities

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)
Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR)	Certification Specifications (CS)
Airworthiness Directives (AD)	Airworthiness Directives (AD)
Advisory Circulars (AC)	

Compliance to FAR/CS

- **Allowable damage that may go undetected**
 - (DUL residual strength; No growth for minimum of 2 service lives)
- **Damage detected by field inspection**
 - (DLL residual strength; No growth until 2 inspection intervals)
- **Discrete source damage known to pilot**
 - (Continued safe-flight; "get-home" loads)
- **All damage that lowers strength below DUL must be repaired when found**
- **Any damage that is repaired must withstand DUL and not impair safe operation of the aircraft for its lifetime**

Damage Tolerance Test Protocol



The Next Design Philosophy???

- Design Philosophies
 - Safe-life
 - Fail-safe
 - Damage tolerance
- Structural Health Monitoring (SHM)
 - Sensors can be embedded in the structure
 - Attained certain degree of maturity and field trials started
 - Can we go for a SHM based design?
 - Is it possible to build a light weight and damage tolerant structure using this philosophy?
 - What are the Issues?

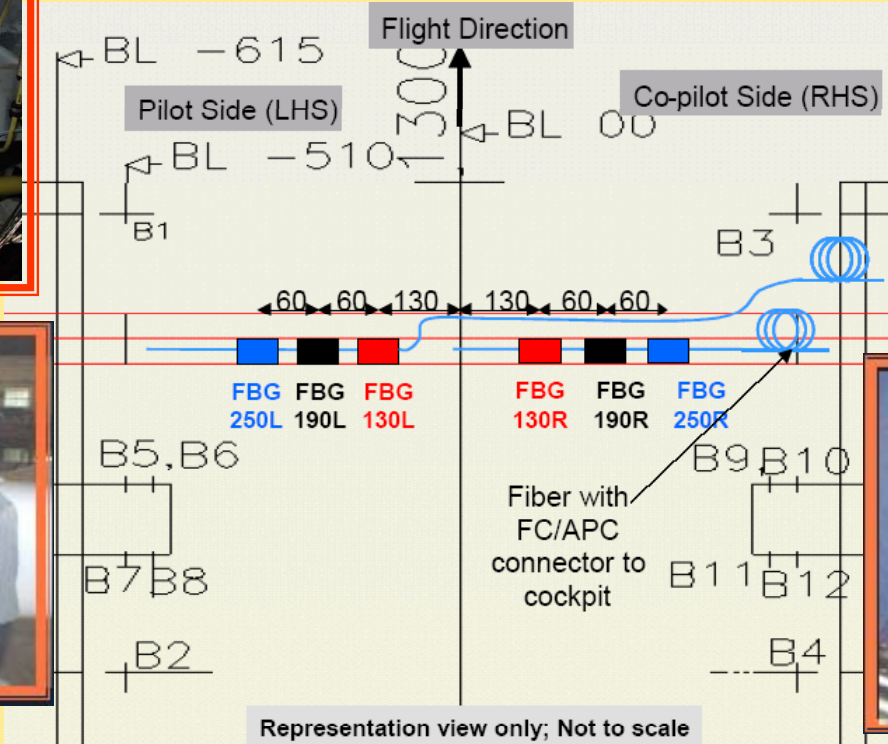
Benefits of Structural Health Monitoring

- **‘Condition-based maintenance’ or ‘maintenance-on-demand’**
 - Lower maintenance costs
 - Higher availability of aircraft
- **Prognostic capabilities of SHM**
 - Better fleet management leading to better resource utilization
- **SHM-based design**
 - Move away from Damage Tolerance design philosophy
 - Lower weight, lower operating costs

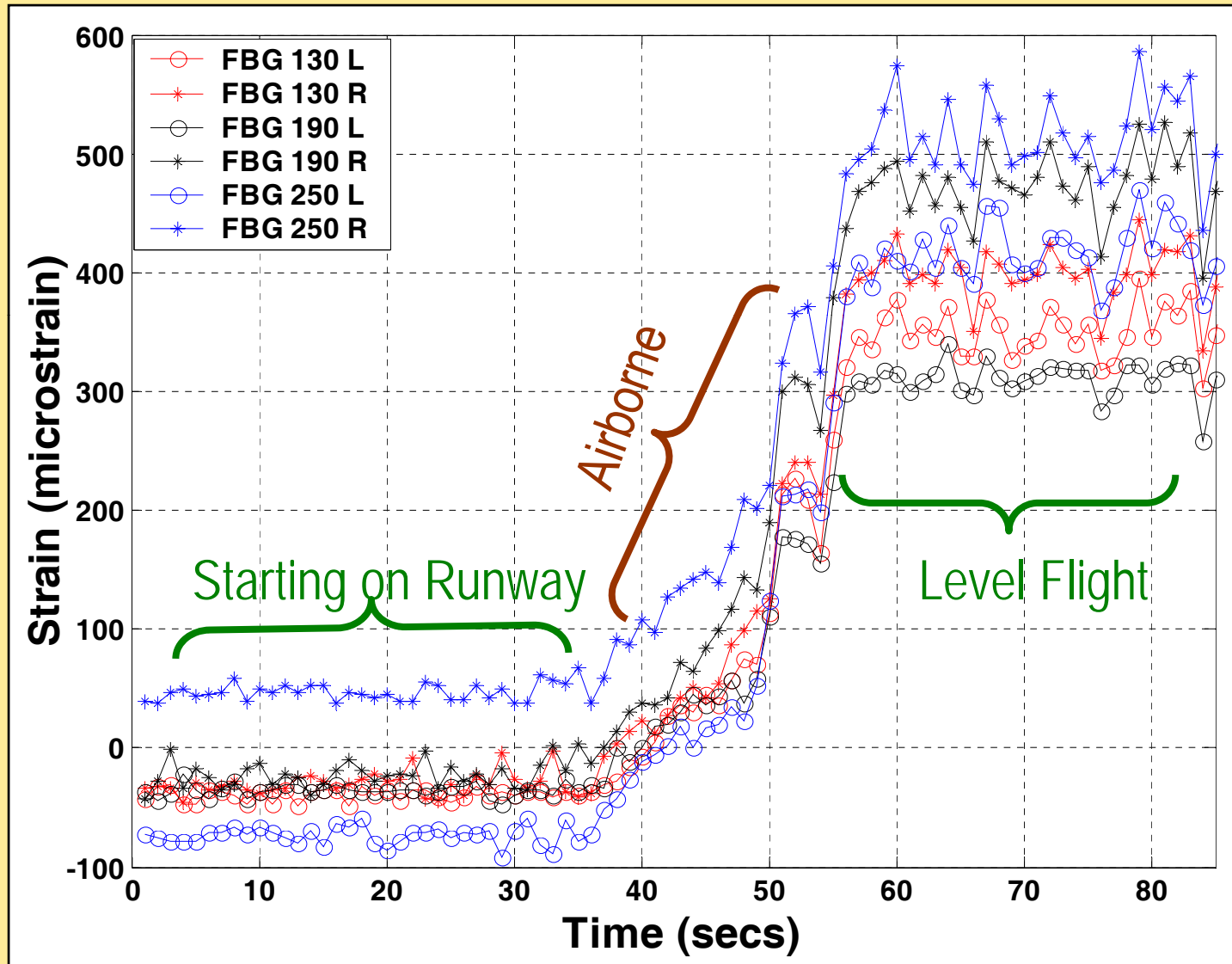
HANSA Flight Trials



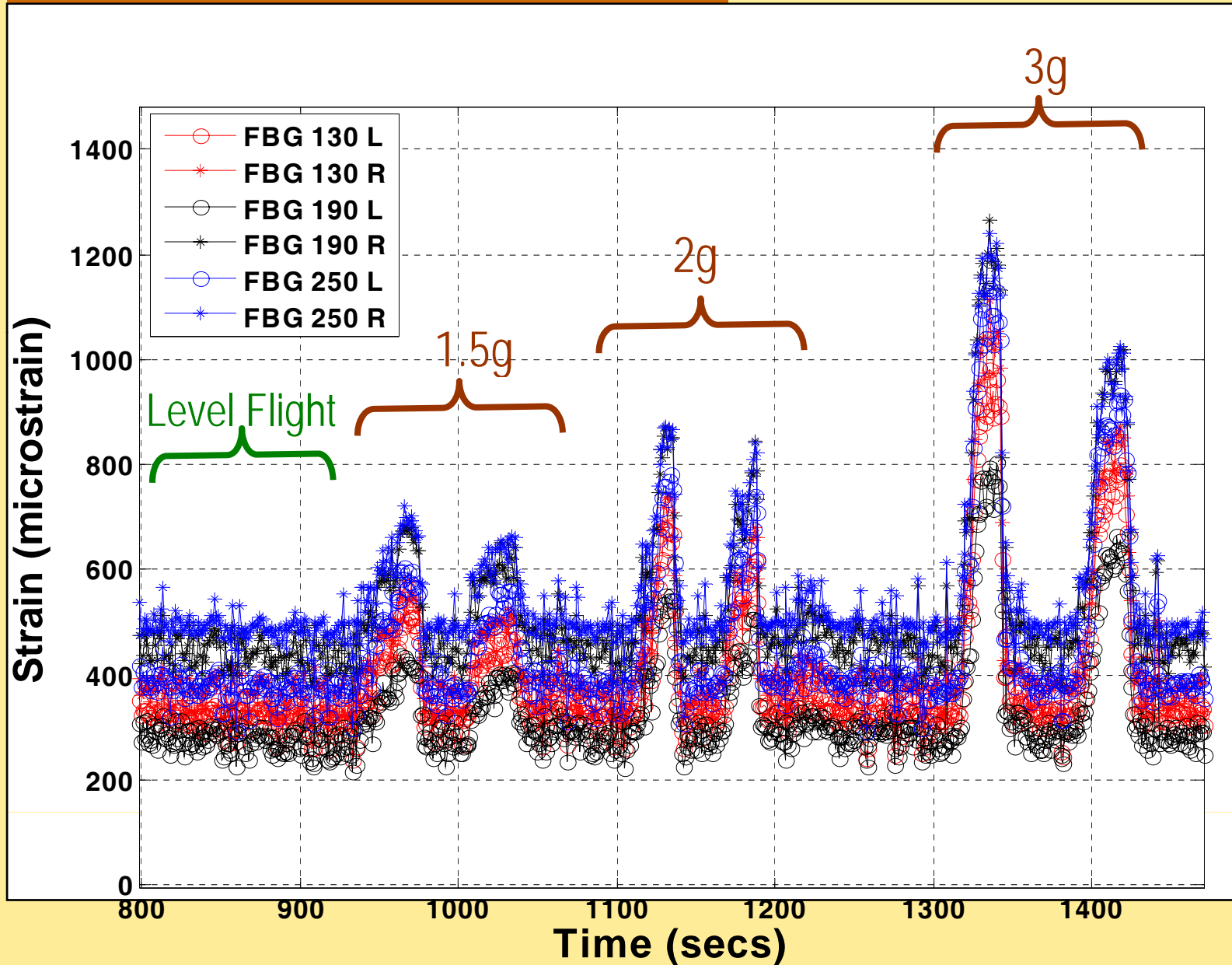
Real Time Measurement



Strain Variation During Take-off



Strain Variation During Flight Maneuvers



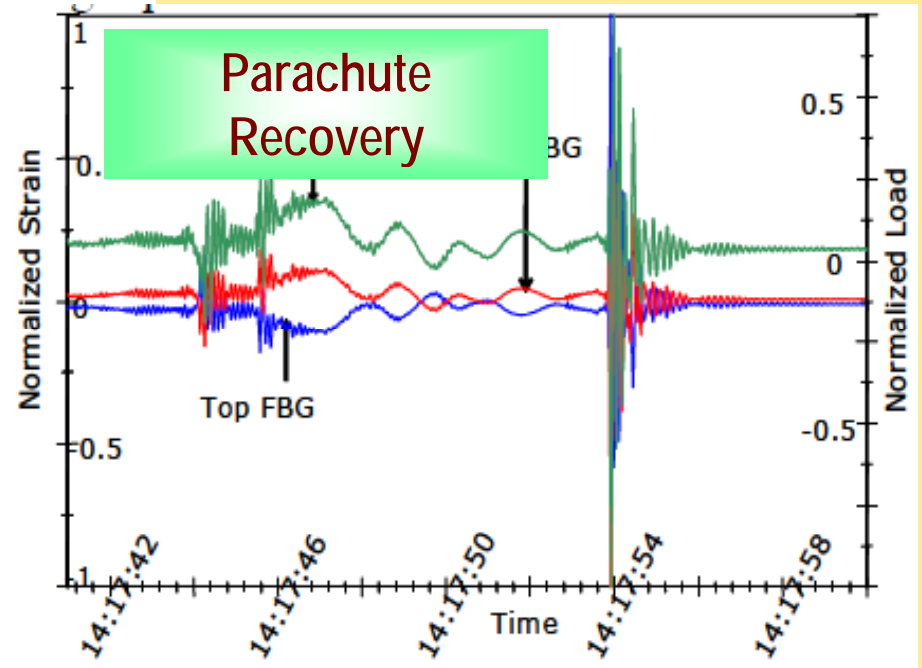
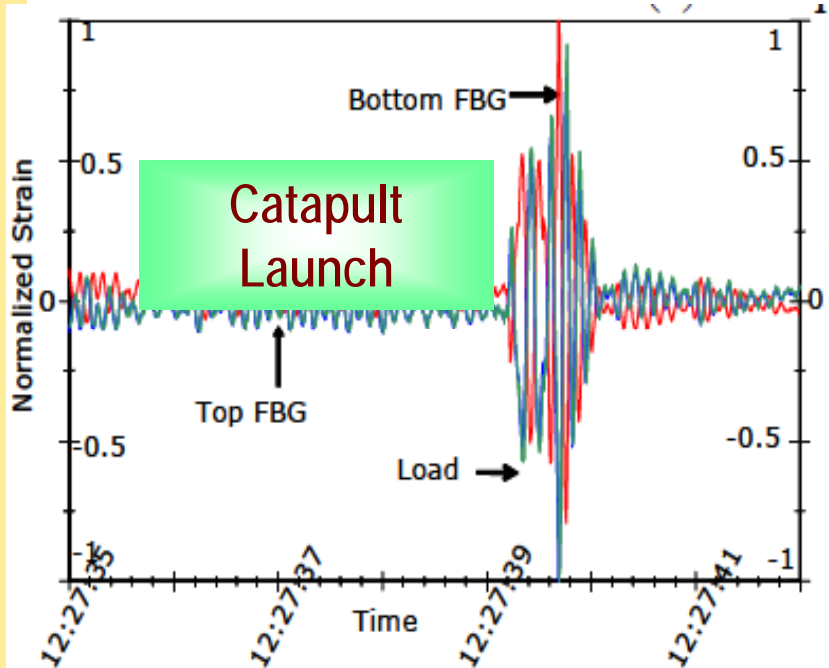
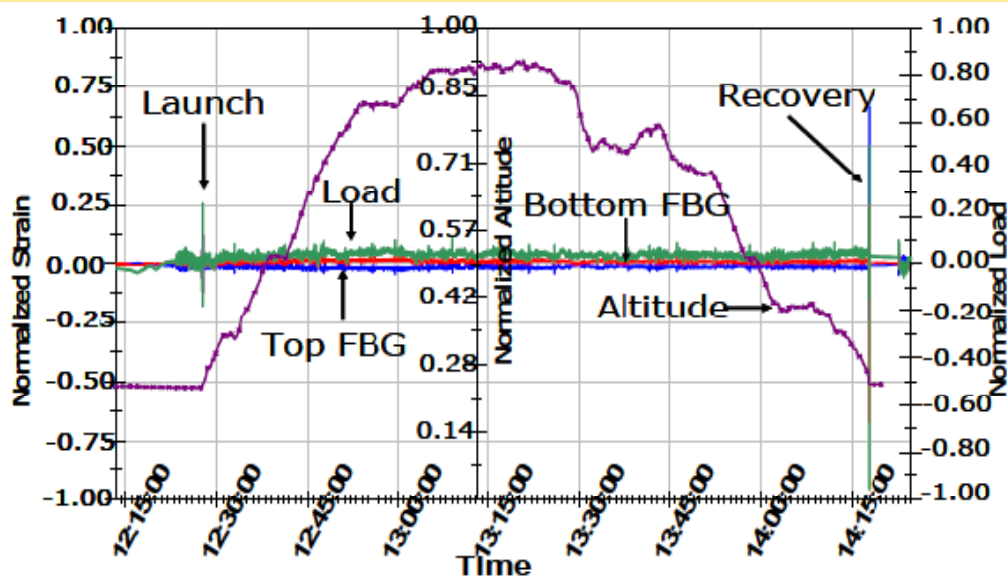
Flight Trial of SHM system on Nishant UAV

- A successful flight trial of SHM system was conducted on Nishant UAV on October 28, 2010 at 12:15 PM at Kolar.
- The UAV was flown for more than two hours as per the flight plan starting from catapult launch, various flight maneuvers and recovered as per parachute recovery.



- More than 6GB of FBG sensor data throughout the flight was acquired.
- **Challenge: Large volume flight data processing and load estimation**
- QuickVIEW software was developed
 - Temperature compensation with Push-Pull topology
 - Sensor data integration with flight data (pitch, yaw, roll etc.)
 - On-site data view and load estimation using ANN based load estimator.

Flight Data Analysis Results



Optic Sensors

Smart Concepts: SMA based HANSA trim tab actuation



Horizontal Tail

Elevator

Trim tab

Wind Tunnel Tests

Wind tunnel tests have been carried out at different wind velocities of 25, 35 & 42m/s

SMA actuated trim-tab remained stable in the deflected condition under the wind load.



Wind tunnel testing of trim tab & Hor. Tail

Concluding remarks

Challenge is to reduce cost

- **Aerospace materials & associated design and manufacturing processes must be optimized in an integrated manner to deliver cost efficient products**
- **Environmental effects and issues of recycling to be addressed**
- **Advanced striker aircrafts being developed which will fly at higher mach nos: hence need composites to meet higher temperatures.**
- **Stealth technology is a major area of research → New materials and nano coatings**

Concluding remarks

- **Need to reduce maintenance costs and have fully on line SHM systems**
- **Smart materials/structures for morphing**
- **FML for energy absorption need to be fully developed**
- **'Mechanic friendly' repair technology to be established**
- **Better understanding of damage tolerance : more robust failure theories – will enable faster certification**
- **All fields of Engineering likely to use more composites – challenge is higher efficiency at a lower cost**



Thank you

