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# The Wave Energy Device: Wave Dragon.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Wave Dragon is a 4 to 11 MW offshore wave energy converter of the overtopping type. It basically consists of two wave reflectors focusing the waves towards a ramp, a reservoir for collecting the overtopping water and a number of hydro turbines for converting the pressure head into power.

In the period from 1998 to 2001 extensive testing on a scale 1:50 model was carried at Aalborg University. During the last two years, testing has started on a prototype of the Wave Dragon in Nissum Bredning, Denmark (scale 1:4.5 of the North Sea).

The prototype was grid connected in May 2003 as the world's first offshore wave energy converter. During this period an extensive measuring program has established the background for optimal design of the structure and regulation of the power take off system. Planning for full scale deployment of a 7 MW unit within the next 2 years is in progress.

The prototype is instrumented in order to be able to monitor power production, wave climate, forces in mooring lines, stresses in the structure and movements of the Wave Dragon.

The paper gives the present status of the Nissum Bredning Prototype.



Figure 1: Photo of the Wave Dragon.

## 2. FUNCTIONING OF WAVE DRAGON

The Wave Dragon consists of three main elements:

- Two patented wave reflectors focusing the waves towards the ramp, linked to the main structure. The wave reflectors have the verified effect of increasing the significant wave height substantially and energy capture by app. 100% in typical wave conditions.
- The main structure consists of a doubly curved ramp and a reservoir.
- A set of low head Kaplan-propeller turbines for converting the hydraulic head in the reservoir into electricity.

When the waves overtop the ramp, water is filled into the floating reservoir at a higher level than the surrounding sea, and this hydraulic head is utilized for power production through the hydro turbines.

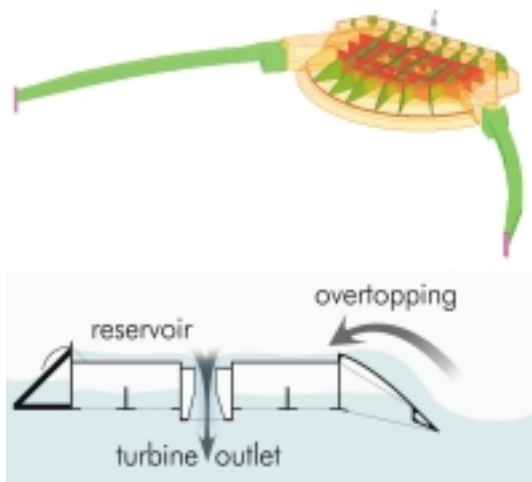


Figure 2: The basic principle of the Wave Dragon.

### 3. NISSUM BREDNING PROTOTYPE

The Nissum Bredning prototype is a wave energy converter designed for Nissum Bredning (a large inland expanse of salt water) in Denmark. During the last 2 years, testing has been ongoing on the Nissum Bredning prototype of the Wave Dragon in Nissum Bredning, Denmark (scale 1:4.5 off the North Sea).

The installed capacity of the Nissum Bredning prototype is 18.2 kW.

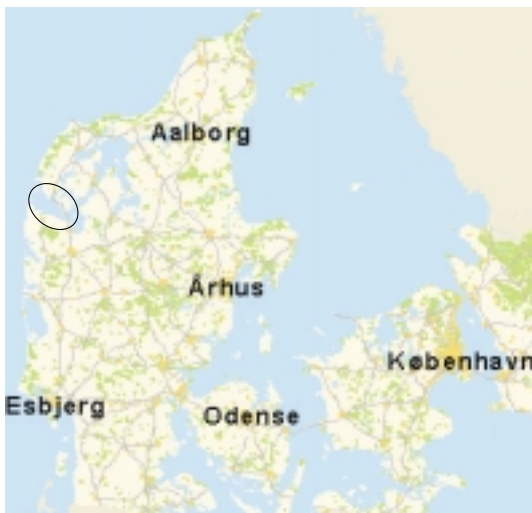


Figure 3: Location of the Nissum Bredning Prototype

Figure 3 shows the location of the Nissum Bredning Prototype, indicated by the ellipse on the map. Nissum Bredning is just off the North Sea, separated from it by two tongues of land.

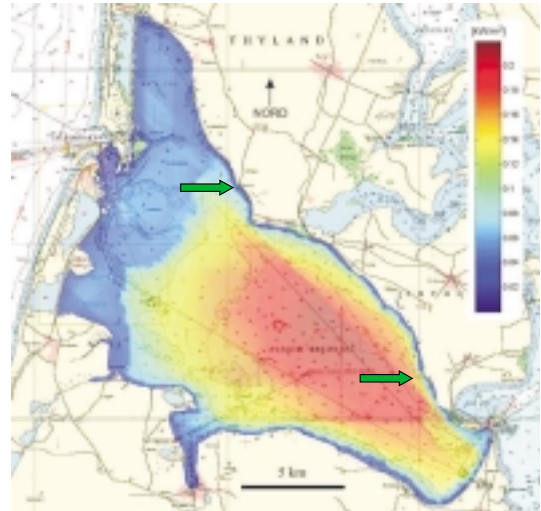


Figure 4: Energy density in Nissum Bredning. The figure also shows the 2 different locations where the machine will be placed.

Figure 4 shows the average wave energy density in Nissum Bredning. The upper arrow on the figure indicates the present location of the Nissum Bredning Prototype; the lower arrow shows the most exposed location in Nissum Bredning, to which the machine will be moved during winter 2005/2006.

The present location was chosen to test the functionality of the machine, as easier access to the machine makes it possible to sort out the inevitable 'teething troubles' before deploying it in the most exposed position.

The Nissum Bredning Prototype was grid connected at its first location (upper arrow on figure 3), thus making it the world's first offshore wave energy converter supplying power to the grid.

The Wave Dragon Nissum Bredning prototype has

a total weight of 237 tonnes, still it is only a scale 1:4.5 of a North Sea device.

During the past 2 years and the next year, an extensive measuring program has and will establish the background for optimal design of the structure and regulation of the power take-off system. Planning for a full scale deployment within the next 2 years is in progress (Sørensen et. al. 2003). Such a structure will probably be placed somewhere in the North Sea, or in the North Atlantic Ocean.

The present paper compares the estimated overtopping rates (calculated from indirect measurements) of the Nissum Bredning Prototype with overtopping rates measured in a hydraulic laboratory using a scale 1:50 model (scale 1:11.1 relative to the Nissum Bredning Prototype).

#### 4. THE WAVE DRAGON CONCEPT

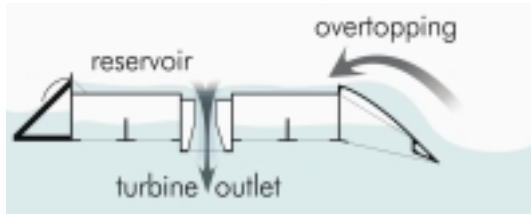


Figure 5: The Wave Dragon concept.

Waves approaching the Wave Dragon are focused towards the ramp, which they then overtop. This water is filled into the floating reservoir at a higher level than the surrounding sea, and this hydraulic head is utilized for power production through the specially designed hydroturbines.

The reservoir makes it possible to average the power production in short term (2-5 wave periods).

Through an advanced pneumatic system it is pos-

sible to adjust the floating level. The entire main body of the Wave Dragon can be raised or lowered, and in this way the crest freeboard can be varied in order to maximize energy output from the Wave Dragon under the sea conditions prevailing at any time. This level adjustment happens continuously. The used time scale for the operation corresponds to approx. 250 wave periods.

Knowledge about overtopping rates is pivotal for establishing the optimal regulation strategy for the Wave Dragon and for the efficiency achievable from the Wave Dragon. What is the optimal floating level for a given sea condition? When is the optimal time to switch on or switch off the individual turbines?

Equations predicting average overtopping rates for the Wave Dragon were first established through tank tests at Aalborg University on a scale 1:50 model in 1998-1999 (Martinelli and Frigaard 1999).

Martinelli and Frigaard 1999 tested the Wave Dragon in long-crested seas as well as in short-crested seas with standard JONSWAP spectra. They presented the following equation to predict overtopping (linear ramp inclination 45 deg.):

$$q = 0.017c_d \cdot \exp\left(-48 \frac{R_c}{H_s} \sqrt{\frac{S_{op}}{2\pi}}\right) \frac{L \sqrt{gH_s^3}}{\sqrt{\frac{S_{op}}{2\pi}}}$$

where,

- $q$  = discharge due to overtopping
- $c_d$  = reduction coefficient accounting for directional spreading effects,  $c_d = 0.9$
- $L$  = length of structure ramp; a length of 86.6 meter was assumed (21.3 meter for the Nissum Bredning Prototype)
- $S_{op}$  =  $H_s/L_{op}$ , where  $L_{op} = \frac{g}{2\pi} T_p^2$
- $T_p$  = peak period; a constant ratio 1.2 between the peak and the mean period was assumed
- $H_s$  = significant wave height
- $R_c$  = crest freeboard

The Wave Dragon model tested by Martinelli and Frigaard 1999 turned out to have some rather large movements; consequently the dynamic behaviour of the model was slightly changed.

Kofoed 2003 tested various slope layouts in order to find a structure producing the maximum overtopping effect. Kofoed’s tests verified a doubly curved ramp to have a significantly positive effect.

Incorporating these changes, a second-generation model was constructed and tested at Aalborg University in 2001. A photo of the model and the prototype can be seen in figure 6.



Figure 6: Photo showing the doubly curved ramp.

Hald and Frigaard 2001 reported overtopping from the tests with the second-generation model, and presented a modified overtopping equation:

$$q = 0.025c_d \cdot \exp\left(-40 \frac{R_c}{H_s} \sqrt{\frac{S_{op}}{2\pi}}\right) \frac{L \sqrt{gH_s^3}}{\sqrt{\frac{S_{op}}{2\pi}}}$$

Figure 7 shows the test data from Hald and Frigaard 2001. Tests first carried out using the original model layout in Martinelli and Frigaard 1999 were repeated by Hald and Frigaard 2001; these

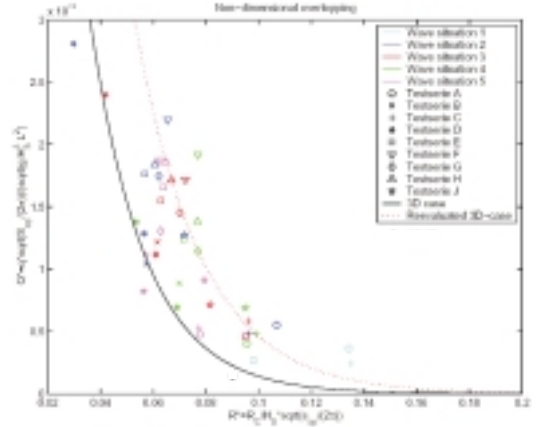


Figure 7: Dimensionless overtopping relation.

tests are labelled Test series A and Test series B in the figure. A reasonable fit with the Martinelli and Frigaard 1999 equation (full line) is seen. Test series C and D represent minor modifications made to the reflector draught; resulting in a small increase in the overtopping. Test series E to J represent data measured on the model with the doubly curved overtopping ramp implemented. The effect of the doubly curved ramp is clearly seen.

All data shown in figure 7 represent 5 standard wave conditions. Each data point corresponds to a test including approx. 1000 waves in a controlled wave environment. In table 1 the wave conditions are listed in North Sea scale. The reason for choosing the Nissum Bredning location for the 1:4.5 scale model of the Wave Dragon was indeed the fact that the wave climate in Nissum Bredning corresponds very well with the wave climate in the North Sea, scaled by a length scale of 4.5.

Situation	$H_s$	$T_p$	Probability	Energy
[-]	m	sec.	% of time	MWhmyear
1	1.0	5.6	46.7	8.2
2	2.0	7.0	22.6	23.8
3	3.0	8.4	10.8	30.2
4	4.0	9.8	5.1	29.4
5	5.0	11.2	2.4	24.3

Table 1: Tested wave situations.

In addition, an overtopping simulation software tool had to be developed, allowing real time simulations of overtopping rates (Jacobsen and Frigaard 1999). The design of the reservoir and the turbine configuration of the Wave Dragon had to be based on a reasonable input discharge history. The time history was considered a random process, and it was generated according to a distribution of overtopping volumes per wave consolidated in literature and mean values obtained by the tests previously described.

The probability of occurrence of wave overtopping for vertical structures, cf. Franco et al. 1994 and for rubble mound dikes, cf. van der Meer and Janssen 1995, can be given in the form of a Rayleigh type distribution:

$$P_{ov} = \exp\left(-\left(\frac{R_c}{cH_s}\right)^2\right)$$

where,

$$c = \begin{array}{l} \text{a constant; set to 1.21} \\ c \text{ can be interpreted as a roughness factor.} \end{array}$$

According to van der Meer and Janssen 1995, the distribution of the overtopping volumes of the individual waves, given that overtopping takes place, is given by a Weibull distribution with shape parameter 0.75:

$$P_{V|ov} = P(V \leq V_{mean}|o) = 1 - \exp\left(-\left(\frac{V_{mean}}{a}\right)^{0.75}\right)$$

where,

$$\begin{array}{ll} a & = \frac{qT_m}{P_{ov}} \\ q & = \text{mean overtopping discharge} \\ T_m & = \text{mean wave period; a constant ratio 1.2 between the peak and the mean period was assumed.} \\ P_{ov} & = \text{the probability of overtopping given in the equation above} \\ V_{mean}|o & = \text{mean overtopping of wave, given wave is overtopping} \end{array}$$

Note that the scale factor  $a$  used for the quantifica-

tion of the overtopping, given that overtopping takes place, is the average overtopped volume, magnified due to the 'average' overtopping probability.

The probability  $P_v$ , that a generic wave (the coming wave) is associated to a overtopping volume  $V$  less or equal to  $V_{mean}$  is:

$$P_v = P(V \leq V_{mean}) = P_{V|ov} \cdot P_{ov}$$

Kofoed and Burcharth (2000) verified the equations giving the time variations of the overtopping for smooth slopes

## 5. TURBINE CONFIGURATION

In order to maximize energy output from the Wave Dragon, the machine is equipped with several small turbines rather than one larger turbine. This facilitate the control of the water level in the reservoir as it is then possible to switch on only a part of the installed power in sea conditions producing relatively small amounts of overtopping water. Furthermore, this construction allows a single small turbine to be switched on or off depending on the actual amount of water coming from a single wave.

The regulation strategy for the Wave Dragon consists of 2 steps. First, the optimal crest freeboard (floating level) for the actual sea condition is calculated. For this calculation a time scale corresponding to approx. 250 wave periods is used. Second, the 'work span' for the turbines needs to be defined. The 'work span' is defined as the the accepted variation in the water level in the reservoir for the given sea condition. As the water level increases towards the top of the 'work span', the turbines are gradually (one by one or in smaller groups) switched on. And correspondingly, as the water level decreases towards the lowest level of the 'work span' the turbines are gradually switched off.

Some different strategies to control this mechanism

will be tested in the coming years in order to maximize energy output. For the time being, the 'work span' is simply divided into a number of distances.

Ideally, the Wave Dragon would be equipped with several similar small turbines; however, the actual turbine configuration on the Nissum Bredning prototype is a result of compromises brought on by financial constraints rather than logical, optimal technical solutions. Like most other wave energy projects, the Wave Dragon project had to adjust the turbine configuration according to the available funds. Therefore, the Wave Dragon is equipped with 3 different types of turbines:

- A Kaplan turbine with Siphon inlet, see figure 10. The turbine was developed through the EU CRAFT project: Low-Pressure Turbine and Control Equipment for Wave Energy Converters (Wave Dragon). Diameter of the Siphon turbine is 0.34 m, and area of cross section is 0.0908 m<sup>2</sup>. Rated power output at a head of 1.0 m is 2.6 kW (500 kW for the North Sea Wave Dragon). Calibrated flow is 0.22 m<sup>3</sup>/sec. at 0.5 m head.
- 3 Dummy turbines, see figure 9. The turbines are not able to produce power, but simply let the overtopped water run back into the sea through a set of calibrated valves. Diameter of the valves are 0.43 m, and area A of cross section is 0.147 m<sup>2</sup>. The discharge Q through the dummy turbines was calibrated to follow the equation  $Q = k \cdot A \sqrt{2gh}$ , (h=pressure head). For the 3 dummy turbines the k-values were found to be 1.05, 1.07 and 1.09 (Knapp and Riemann 2003).
- 6 Kaplan turbines with cylinder gates, see figure 8. These turbines have data similar to the 'Siphon' Kaplan turbine. Diameter of these tur-

bines is 0.34 m. Rated power output at a head of 1.0 m is 2.6 kW. Calibrated flow 0.22 m<sup>3</sup>/sec at a head of 0.5 m. The turbines were fabricated in Austria by Kössler, and were installed in September 2003. Installation of generators was finished February 2004.



Figure 8: Kaplan turbine with Siphon inlet



Figure 9: The 3 'dummy' turbines.



Figure 10: Kaplan turbine with cylinder gate.

Based on measurements of the instantaneous pressure head, and knowing the number of currently open turbines, it is possible to calculate the flow

through the turbines. The opening period is defined as the period from starting time of the opening process to starting time of the closing process. Obviously the periods of the opening and closing operations will be accompanied by some uncertainty.

## 6. WAVE MEASUREMENTS

Waves are measured indirectly through a pressure transducer placed approx. 2 meter under the sea surface. The pressure transducer is mounted on an arm attached to the mooring pile of the Wave Dragon. The transformation from pressure to surface is done by linear wave theory and the presence of the mooring pile with supporting structure is taken into account.

Wave parameters are calculated continuously in a 16 minutes long time window. The length of the time window corresponds to typically 250 waves. Zero down crossing analyses are performed and the average period  $T_m$  is used to characterize the waves. The peak periods  $T_p$  of the spectra are assumed to be  $T_p = 1.2 \cdot T_m$ .

## 7. PROTOTYPE OVERTOPPING

The Wave Dragon floats on air chambers to make it possible to adjust the floating level of the machine. Therefore, scale effects have to be considered, and tank tests are not directly scalable. Scale effects will mainly be presented on the movements of the Wave Dragon, and laboratory tests have shown that the overtopping is very strongly dependent on the movements. It must be mentioned that movements have been measured in laboratory tests, and that the Nissum Bredning Prototype is equipped with accelerometers in order to measure movements. Smaller movements have been observed in prototype compared to model scale, where the compressibility of air has not been scaled, typically resulting in less damping of motions.

During autumn 2004 and over the coming winter, overtopping results have been and will be collected continuously, in periods without down time of the instruments.

Obtaining measurements in a real sea condition is difficult. And it has indeed turned out to be even more difficult and time-consuming than expected. The sea is extremely rough on the instruments (Kofod and O'Donovan 2003). Nevertheless, throughout several months in test period average overtopping rates have been successfully monitored on the Nissum Bredning Prototype, both under ordinary conditions and under storm conditions.

It is assumed that all water overtopping the ramp passes through the turbines. This means that no spill is expected. Visual inspections support this assumption; at least in calmer wave conditions.

Therefore, an estimate of the overtopping amount can be calculated, knowing the characteristics of the turbines, the head of the free surface and the opening time of the turbines.

Figure 11 gives an example of the measurements. Unfortunately, it is difficult to see the measurements clearly in the figure; however, the purpose of including the plot is to give an idea of the variations in the signals.

The x-axis represents the time. The length of the axis is 5 minutes corresponding to a little less than 100 waves.

The y-axis shows 5 curves: 'work span' (in this example approx. 10 cm), water level within 'work span' (in this example 0% - 100%), number of running turbines (0-10 in the example), wave height (approx 50 cm in the example) and water level in reservoir (50-60 cm in the example).



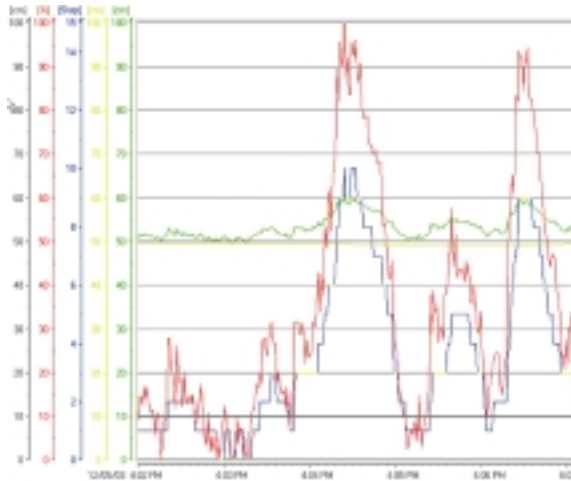


Figure 11: Measured data as shown in the control program.

From figure 11 each individual wave can be recognized as a change in the water level in the reservoir. This can be seen most clearly when studying the curve for the water level within the 'work span' (red curve).

Figure 11 also demonstrates the frequency for the turbines to be switched on (and later switched off). The situation seen on the figure corresponds to a turbine being switched on almost every 10 second in average.

The outlet is calculated as:

$$Q_{\text{overtop}} \simeq Q_{\text{out}} = \int_{\text{time}} \sum_{i=1}^N F_i(h) G_i dt$$

where,

- $i$  = turbine number
- $N$  = number of installed turbines
- $h$  = instantaneous head in reservoir
- $F$  = calibrated function describing flow out through a turbine
- $G$  = function describing whether the turbine valve is opened or closed. At present this function can only take the values 0 or 1.

The overtopping data from the Nissum Bredning

Prototype show good agreement with the laboratory overtopping data, although slightly more overtopping is seen on the Nissum Bredning Prototype than expected from the laboratory.

Figure 12 gives an example of such a comparison.

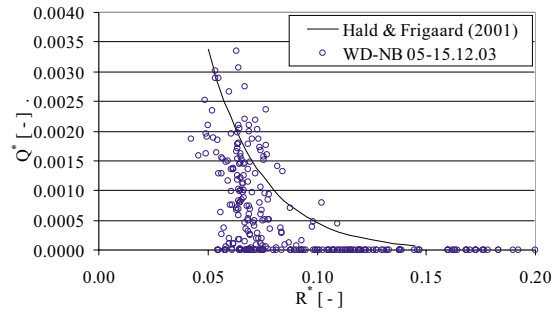


Figure 12: Example of Overtopping results

In the near future, much more data covering a larger parameter range can be expected. Hopefully, this will lead to more detailed conclusions. For the time being, however, we find it surprising, that the data do in fact correspond so well. Normally, overtopping data show an enormous scatter, even for laboratory data. A factor of 5-10 is not unusual in literature. However, for the conditions with large amounts of overtopping less scatter is normally seen.

In the controlled laboratory environment, the waves were generated, Rayleigh distributed, with a standard JONSWAP spectrum and a standard groupiness factor. The sea conditions were kept constant for a period corresponding to 1000 waves. In the real sea in Nissum Bredning, the wave conditions are much more scattered.

## 8. ENERGY PRODUCTION

The Wave Dragon Nissum Bredning Prototype has now been produced electricity for more than 2 years. During the period May 2003 to December 2004 the availability of the system has been continuously in-

creasing, and is now higher than 80%. Here it must be stressed that the purpose of the model is to demonstrate that it can survive in the real sea, and to optimize the regulation strategy rather than directly energy production.

In general the electrical production is as estimated years back. A typical power production in the Wave Dragon Nissum Bredning Prototype is 2.5 kW. Such a power production will correspond to approx. 800 KW in a North Sea Wave Dragon. Taking into account that until now the Wave Dragon Nissum Bredning Prototype has been situated in a rather sheltered area of the Nissum Bredning.

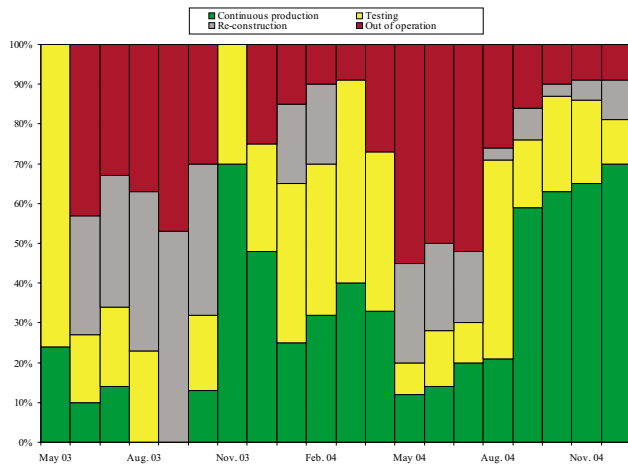


Figure 13: Availability of the Wave Dragon.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Overtopping has been measured on the Nissum Bredning Prototype of the Wave Dragon. The functionality of the Wave Dragon overtopping concept has been proven.

Good agreement to laboratory-based overtopping equations was found, although some more overtopping was measured in the Nissum Bredning Prototype.

The extra overtopping is assumed to originate

from wind effects, and from scale effects on the movements of the Wave Dragon.

During the test period from May 2003 to December 2004 the availability has constantly been increased, and the availability from the last 3 test month (autumn 2004) has been more than 80 %.

In conclusion the Nissum Bredning Prototype has supported the overtopping concept, and has given trust in constructing a full scale device for the North Sea.

## 10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wave Dragon has received support from The European Commission, The Danish Energy Agency and several private companies and foundations. Please, look at the Webpage: [www.wavedragon.net](http://www.wavedragon.net) for further information on the project.

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