IEC TS 61400-4-1

Edition 1.0 2026-02

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Corrected version
2026-04

Wind energy generation systems -
Part 4-1: Reliability assessment of drivetrain components in wind turbines

ICS 27.180

ISBN 978-2-8327-1018-0

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Wind energy generation systems - Part 4-1: Reliability assessment of drivetrain components in wind turbines

FOREWORD

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IEC TS 61400-4-1 has been prepared by IEC technical committee 88: Wind energy generation systems, in co-operation with ISO technical committee 60: Gears. It is a Technical Specification.

It is published as a dual logo technical specification.

The text of this Technical Specification is based on the following documents:

Draft	Report on voting
88/1124/DTS	88/1147/RVDTS

Full information on the voting for its approval can be found in the report on voting indicated in the above table.

The language used for the development of this Technical Specification is English.

This document was drafted in accordance with ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, and developed in accordance with ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1 and ISO/IEC Directives, IEC Supplement, available at www.iec.ch/members_experts/refdocs. The main document types developed by IEC are described in greater detail at www.iec.ch/publications.

A list of all parts of the IEC 61400 series, published under the general title *Wind energy generation systems*, can be found on the IEC website.

The committee has decided that the contents of this document will remain unchanged until the stability date indicated on the IEC website under webstore.iec.ch in the data related to the specific document. At this date, the document will be

– reconfirmed,

– withdrawn, or

– revised.

This corrected version of IEC TS 61400-4-1:2026 incorporates the following correction:

– addition in the foreword that this is a double logo technical specification prepared in cooperation with ISO/TC 60

INTRODUCTION

Gearboxes historically have been and still are a large contributor to wind turbine operating expenses and downtime. IEC 61400-4 describes requirements for the specification, design, and verification of gearboxes in wind turbines. This Technical Specification (TS) accompanies IEC 61400-4 and describes a method for the calculation of the design reliability of gearboxes for wind turbines.

The method enables comparison of the calculated reliability of gearbox designs as a function of time. It allows gearbox suppliers, wind turbine manufacturers, wind plant owners, and others to compare different gearbox designs on equal terms. For example, the design reliability can be compared between different gearbox designs for the same load conditions or for the same gearbox in different load conditions. Wind turbine manufacturers and operators can also use the information for defining field service and repair strategies.

Currently, that occur in the field have a standardized or generally accepted calculation method (Hovgaard 2015). Therefore, as illustrated in Figure 1, there is a difference between the calculated failure probability and apparent failure probability observed in the field.

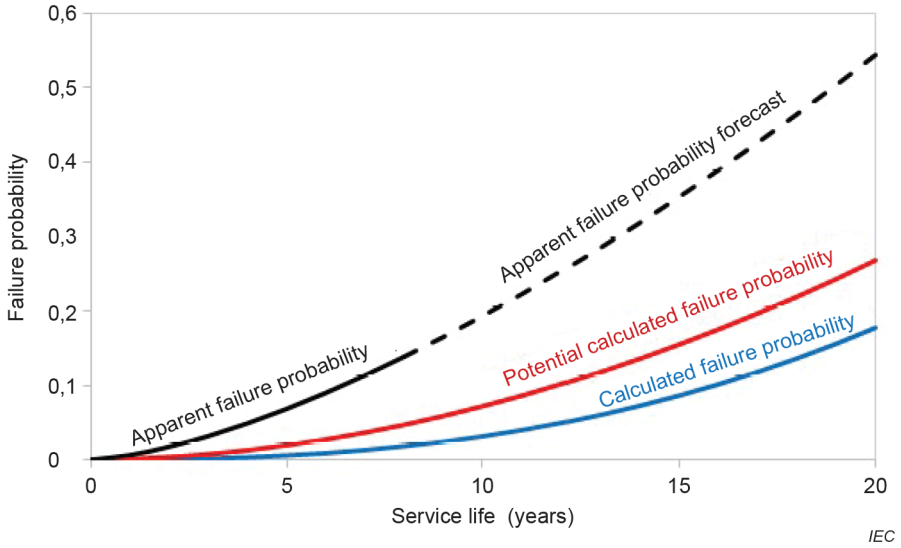

Figure 1 – Calculated design versus apparent failure probability

The method described in this document can accommodate additional failure modes in the future, as long these modes are calculable according to a standardized method and are time related. Figure 1 also indicates how the inclusion of additional failure modes might reduce the gap between calculated and apparent failure probability in the future. Further information can be found in Strasser et al. (2015).

1 Scope

This part of IEC 61400 specifies a method to calculate the design reliability of wind turbines gearboxes covered by IEC 61400-4, based upon failure modes where standardized calculation methods are publicly available.

Currently, not all failure mechanisms that occur in the field have accepted theoretical models. Therefore, the method only provides a quantitative assessment method of the failure mechanisms that can be described with accepted mathematical models for the complete gearbox, stages (functional units), field replaceable units, and individual components.

For the calculable failure mechanisms, it is possible to compare the reliability between different gearbox designs within the limitations of the theoretical models. The use of field-based statistical parameters can improve the accuracy of the calculated reliability.

The calculated design reliability can provide information for the lifecycle management strategy. However, this document does not provide trade-off decisions between higher design reliability and maintenance strategies (e.g. preventive or predictive maintenance). This document does not consider repairable system analysis.

Due to the lack of accepted theoretical models for some failure modes, the model can currently not predict the apparent failure probability in the field.

Neither this document nor IEC 61400-4 specify a minimum value of design reliability.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

IEC 61400-4, *Wind energy generation systems - Part 4: Design requirements for wind turbine gearboxes*

IEC 61400-8, *Wind energy generation systems - Part 8: Design of wind turbine structural components*

ISO 6336-2:2019, *Calculation of load capacity of spur and helical gears - Part 2: Calculation of surface durability (pitting)*

ISO 6336-3:2019, *Calculation of load capacity of spur and helical gears - Part 3: Calculation of tooth bending strength*

ISO 6336-5:2016, *Calculation of load capacity of spur and helical gears - Part 5: Strength and quality of materials*

ISO 6336-6, *Calculation of load capacity of spur and helical gears - Part 6: Calculation of service life under variable load*

ISO 16281, *Rolling bearings - Methods for calculating the modified reference rating life for universally loaded bearings*

DIN 743 (all parts), *Shafts and axles, calculations of load capacity*

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ISO 281, *Rolling bearings - Dynamic load ratings and rating life*

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ISO 10825-1, *Gears - Wear and damage to gear teeth - Part 1: Nomenclature and characteristics*

ISO/TR 10825-2, *Gears - Wear and damage to gear teeth - Supplementary information*

ISO 15243, *Rolling bearings - Damage and failures - Terms, characteristics and causes*

VDMA 23904, *Reliability Assessment for Wind Energy Gearboxes*

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STRASSER, D., THOMA, F, YÜKSEK, S. and SCHMALTZ, P., *From a Safety Factor Driven Concept to Reliability Engineering: Development of an Multi-Mega-Watt Wind Energy Gearbox*. Conference for Wind Power Drives, Aachen, Germany, 2015

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