

# The Impact of Fiber Effective Area on Systems using Raman Amplification

## White Paper



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**WP7136**

Issued: January 2002  
ISO 9001 Registered

### Introduction

Large effective area ( $A_{\text{eff}}$ ) fibers are beneficial in reducing the effects of fiber non-linearities when signal power is high. Conversely, when Raman pumping is used, small  $A_{\text{eff}}$  fibers increase the Raman efficiency and therefore give higher gains for a set pump power. The primary purpose of this paper is to show the significant impact of the noise generated within the Raman amplifier. The second purpose is to demonstrate that fiber attenuation must also be taken into account to assess how the Raman performance of different fiber designs can impact overall transmission performance. To illustrate these points, transmission results from an experiment using Corning® SMF-28™ fiber with an  $A_{\text{eff}}$  of  $80 \mu\text{m}^2$  are compared to results using Corning Vascade™ L1000 fiber, which has an  $A_{\text{eff}}$  of  $102 \mu\text{m}^2$ .

**Nigel Taylor**

Technical Manager Submarine Photonics  
Application & Research Center

**Jim Grochocinski**

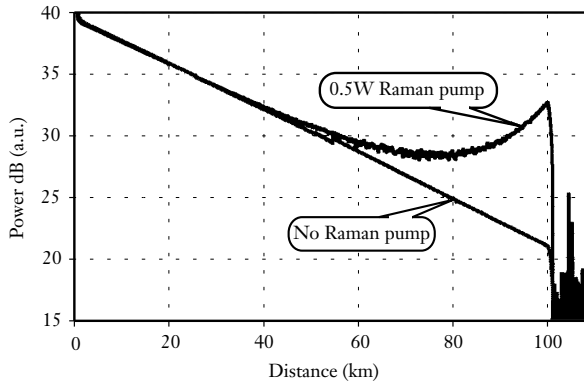
Business Development Manager

### The Distributed Nature Of Raman Gain

The main benefit of a distributed Raman amplifier (DRA) over a discrete amplifier, such as an erbium-doped fiber amplifier (EDFA), lies in the fact that the amplification occurs at a distance from the fiber end where the signal power is higher. This decreases the level that the signal power drops to in the span and consequently increases the overall optical signal-to-noise ratio — improving the system bit error rate (BER).

Figure 1 illustrates the signal levels with and without Raman pumping from the receiver end and shows the Raman gain distributed over approximately the last 40 km of the fiber. In systems using a single fiber type, the exact distribution of the gain is largely independent of the fiber effective area and is related to the fiber loss at the pump wavelength.

**Figure 1** OTDR traces for 101 km of SMF-28 fiber with and without Raman pumping



**Dependence of Raman gain on pump power**

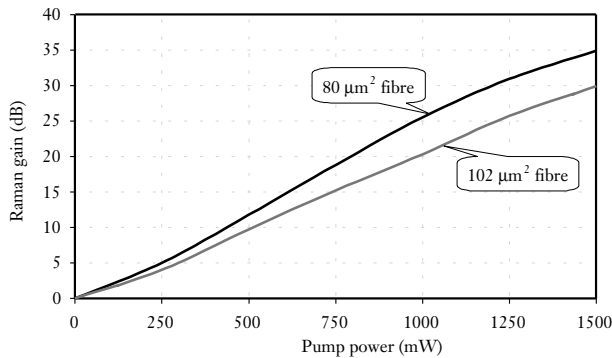
The amount of Raman gain for a fiber is calculated in the equation below:

$$\text{gain(dB)} = 10 \log_{10}(e) \cdot \frac{g_r \cdot L_{\text{eff}} \cdot P_0}{A_{\text{eff}}}$$

- Where  $g_r$  is the fiber Raman gain coefficient (approx. the same for the two fibers tested)
- $P_0$  is the Raman pump power input into the fiber
- $L_{\text{eff}}$  is the effective length for the Raman interaction ( $L_{\text{eff}} = 10 \log_{10}(e) / \text{pump attenuation}$ )
- $A_{\text{eff}}$  is the fiber effective area

This equation predicts that the  $80 \mu\text{m}^2$  fiber will provide 30% more Raman gain in dBs for the same pump power than the  $102 \mu\text{m}^2$  fiber. This is indeed found to be the case as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2** Difference in Raman gain for fibers with different effective areas

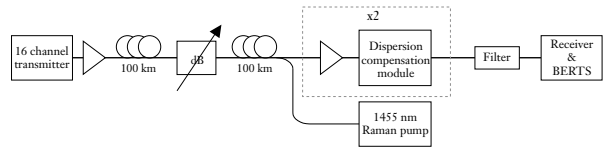


**Impact of Raman noise**

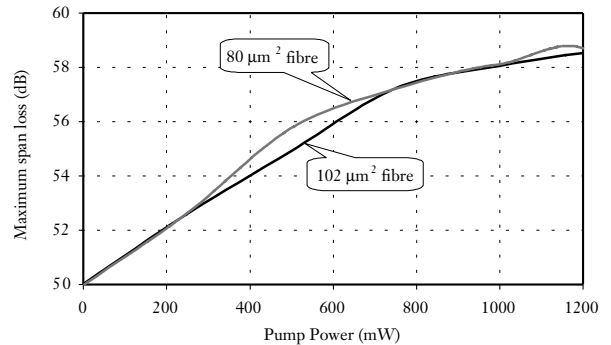
Stimulated Raman scattering produces amplification in a DRA in a manner analogous to an EDFA. Furthermore, as in an EDFA, this is always accompanied by amplified spontaneous emission (ASE) which manifests itself as noise at the receiver.

The experimental configuration shown in Figure 3 is used to demonstrate the impact of Raman gain and noise on the maximum loss that can be placed between transmitter and receiver. The power launched into the first 100 km span was kept constant and the loss of the attenuator in the middle of the span under test was adjusted until the BER was  $1 \times 10^{-8}$ . The maximum span loss is defined as the loss of this attenuator after adjustment plus the fiber loss. Figure 4 shows this plotted as a function of Raman pump power for the two different effective area fibers.

**Figure 3** Experimental configuration for comparing fibers with different effective areas



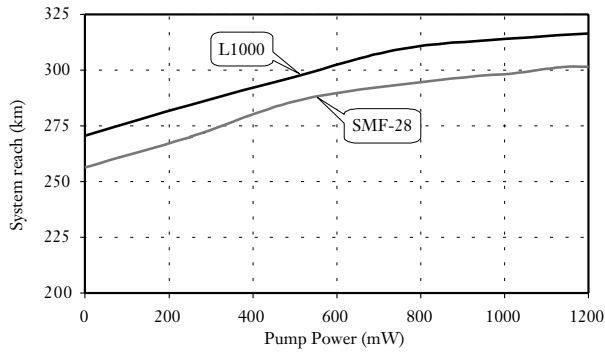
**Figure 4** Maximum span loss for a BER of  $10^{-8}$  versus pump power



In general, both fibers have similar maximum span losses for a given Raman pump power. A more detailed analysis shows that this is due to two factors. First, the higher Raman gain in the smaller effective area fiber is accompanied by a similar increase in the Raman noise. Secondly, the gain occurs farther from the fiber end for the  $102 \mu\text{m}^2$  fiber due to its lower loss at the 1455 nm pump wavelength (0.227 dB/km cf. 0.241 dB/km). In this case, the combination of both of these substantially reduces any system benefits potentially gained from Raman pumping by using the lower effective area fiber.

In the experiment described, the  $102 \mu\text{m}^2$  Vascade L1000 fiber had a loss at 1550 nm of 0.185 dB/km while the loss of the  $80 \mu\text{m}^2$  SMF-28 fiber was 0.195 dB/km. Using these figures, the maximum span losses shown in Figure 4 can be converted into total system reach as shown in Figure 5. This illustrates that even in systems with Raman amplification, a low fiber loss is still critical in order to maximize the distance over which satisfactory transmission is possible.

**Figure 5** Maximum span length for a BER of  $10^{-8}$  versus pump power



### Summary

The major advantage of a DRA over a stand-alone EDFA is that it provides gain a distance away from the fiber end where the signal power is higher. The distribution of this gain is largely set by the fiber attenuation at the pump wavelength. For a given pump power, the Raman gain in dBs is approximately inversely proportional to the fiber effective area. Thus, for a given pump power, the Raman gain in a fiber with an effective area of  $80 \mu\text{m}^2$  is almost 30% higher than in a  $102 \mu\text{m}^2$  fiber. This higher Raman gain, however, is also accompanied by more Raman ASE noise which significantly reduces the advantages seen in overall system performance. Therefore, fiber loss at both the pump and signal wavelengths as well as Raman gain efficiency need to be considered when selecting fiber types for Raman amplified systems.

**Corning Incorporated**  
**[www.corning.com/opticalfiber](http://www.corning.com/opticalfiber)**

One Riverfront Plaza  
Corning, NY 14831  
U.S.A.

Phone: 800-525-2524 (U.S. and Canada)  
607-786-8125 (International)

Fax: 800-539-3632 (U.S. and Canada)  
607-786-8344 (International)

Email: [cofic@corning.com](mailto:cofic@corning.com)

**Europe**

Berkeley Square House  
Berkeley Square  
London W1X 5PE  
U.K.

Phone: 00 800 2800 4800 (U.K.\*, Ireland, France,  
Germany, The Netherlands, Spain and Sweden)

00 800 781 516 (Italy)

+44 7000 280 480 (All other countries)

Fax: +44 7000 250 450

Email: [eurocofic@corning.com](mailto:eurocofic@corning.com)

**Asia Pacific**

Australia  
Phone: 1-800-148-690  
Fax: 1-800-148-568

Indonesia  
Phone: 001-803-015-721-1261  
Fax: 001-803-015-721-1262

Malaysia  
Phone: 1-800-80-3156  
Fax: 1-800-80-3155

Philippines  
Phone: 1-800-1-116-0338  
Fax: 1-800-1-116-0339

Singapore  
Phone: 800-1300-955  
Fax: 800-1300-956

Thailand  
Phone: 001-800-1-3-721-1263  
Fax: 001-800-1-3-721-1264

**Latin America**

Brazil  
Phone: 000817-762-4732  
Fax: 000817-762-4996

Mexico  
Phone: 001-800-235-1719  
Fax: 001-800-339-1472

Venezuela  
Phone: 800-1-4418  
Fax: 800-1-4419

**Greater China**

Beijing  
Phone: (86) 10-6505-5066  
Fax: (86) 10-6505-5077

Hong Kong  
Phone: (852) 2807-2723  
Fax: (852) 2807-2152

Shanghai  
Phone: (86) 21-3222-4668  
Fax: (86) 21-6288-1575

Taiwan  
Phone: (886) 2-2716-0338  
Fax: (886) 2-2716-0339

E-mail: [GCCofic@corning.com](mailto:GCCofic@corning.com)

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