Swimsol's SolarSea®: Maldives' Largest Floating Solar Array at Sea Saves One Island USD 1.5 Million Per Year

First floating solar platform at sea deployed in 2014 • 2.4 MW system now powers the island entirely on solar during daylight • Over 50 resort islands across the Maldives now run on Swimsol solar

MALÉ, Maldives, April 22, 2026 – Swimsol's 2.4 MW SolarSea® PV array, floating at sea in the Maldives, runs the island of Cheval Blanc Randheli entirely on solar during daylight hours — saving an estimated USD 1.5 million per year in diesel costs as fuel prices climb worldwide.

In the Maldives, each island generates its own electricity with diesel generators — there are no grid connections between distant atolls. The country spends around a tenth of GDP on diesel imports alone, the equivalent of one hour of every working person's day going toward electricity. With global fuel prices climbing, SolarSea® replaces that with a foreseeable electricity price for 30 years.

Martin Putschek, founder and CEO of Swimsol: "When we installed our first prototype in 2014, there were a lot of very valid questions about whether it would last. More than a decade later, those early platforms are still producing. The 2.4 MW system at Cheval Blanc proves it works at scale. Multiple SolarSea projects are now completed, with many more underway across the Maldives, Seychelles, and other island nations."

Lionel Valla, General Manager, Cheval Blanc Randheli: "Beauty of the Maldives is a treasure that must be protected. By embracing the sun's boundless energy, we honour nature's generosity and reduce our reliance on fossil resources, illuminating a future where sustainability is not only our responsibility but also in the highest interest of our planet."

World's First Floating Solar at Sea

In 2014, Swimsol installed the world's first floating solar platform at sea. The challenge is physical: less than 1% of the Maldives is land — the rest is ocean. Most islands are so small you can walk around them in half an hour. A single 2.4 MW installation needs more than two football fields of space — space that simply does not exist on many islands. SolarSea® was built to put solar panels on the sea.

From Zero Trust to 50 Islands

When Swimsol first approached Maldives resorts about solar, the answer was simple: no. Diesel was polluting, but familiar and reliable. Island engineers did not want to risk blackouts at properties where guests pay over USD 2,000 per night. The company had to earn that trust one island at a time — and in the process, make it all hassle-free.

The team came to the Maldives with floating solar technology, but had to start with rooftop panels just to prove that solar works at all. Then prove that generators can shut down safely during solar hours. Then — finally — that solar can float at sea. It took six years to sign the first major resort. Then word spread, resorts talk. Today, more than 50 resort islands run on Swimsol PV systems, including Four Seasons, Waldorf Astoria, One&Only, and The Ritz-Carlton.

What It Takes to Power an Island

There are no ports, no warehouses, and often no space to lay down a container. Swimsol engineers move eight-tonne transformers across islands where the widest path is a sandy track built for golf buggies — and designed custom trolleys to do it. Every system is designed to European engineering standards and maintained by a team of more than 150 professionals across Austria and the Maldives. Swimsol has done this more than 50 times — each one a unique island, a unique grid.

For the resort, it's simple. Swimsol designs, builds, operates, and maintains everything. One provider and one contract. Foreseeable electricity price, cheaper than diesel. The resort focuses on hospitality.

Scaling Across Island Nations

SolarSea systems are operating at ten locations — most in the Maldives, with additional installations in Indonesia and Chile. Further installations are taking shape across the Maldives, Seychelles, and beyond. Applications now extend beyond resorts to fish farms and public electricity grids, with growing demand from Small Island Developing States and coastal nations worldwide. The Maldives has 600 MW of installed electricity capacity — more than 90% of it still diesel-powered. Swimsol has installed 50 MWp of solar capacity to date.

The Full Story

The full documentary follows Swimsol's journey from the world's first floating solar platform at sea in 2014 to the 2.4 MW system now powering Cheval Blanc Randheli — the engineering, the logistics, and the team that made it possible.

Short film: https://youtu.be/Urjh-FLk55A
Full documentary: https://youtu.be/qupjpr0Nud8
High-resolution images available at:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1iXohvyL0n_RqiEUXTinChlGJvfMDjUXe?usp=share_link

About Swimsol

Founded in Austria, operating continuously in the Maldives since 2012. Over 50 MWp of solar capacity and 25 MWh of battery storage installed across more than 50 resort islands. Over 150 professionals across Austria and the Maldives. Swimsol pioneered the world's first floating solar platform at sea and remains the leading solar energy provider in the Maldives. The company specialises in micro-grids and remote tropical island energy — combining offshore floating solar (SolarSea®), rooftop and ground-mounted PV, and battery storage into complete island energy systems, offered turnkey or financed under long-term Power Purchase Agreements.

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