

# Rotating, Sun-Tracking Solar Islands for Swiss Lake

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Manmade islands for the production of renewable energy – they're all the rage, suddenly.

A few weeks ago we told you about [Belgium's plan](#) to build an island in the North Sea with a below-sea-level reservoir in its middle that would be used for a sort of reverse pumped-hydro energy storage. Now there's a scheme in the works that could result in rotating, sun-tracking, solar-power-gathering islands going in on Lake Neuchâtel in western Switzerland.

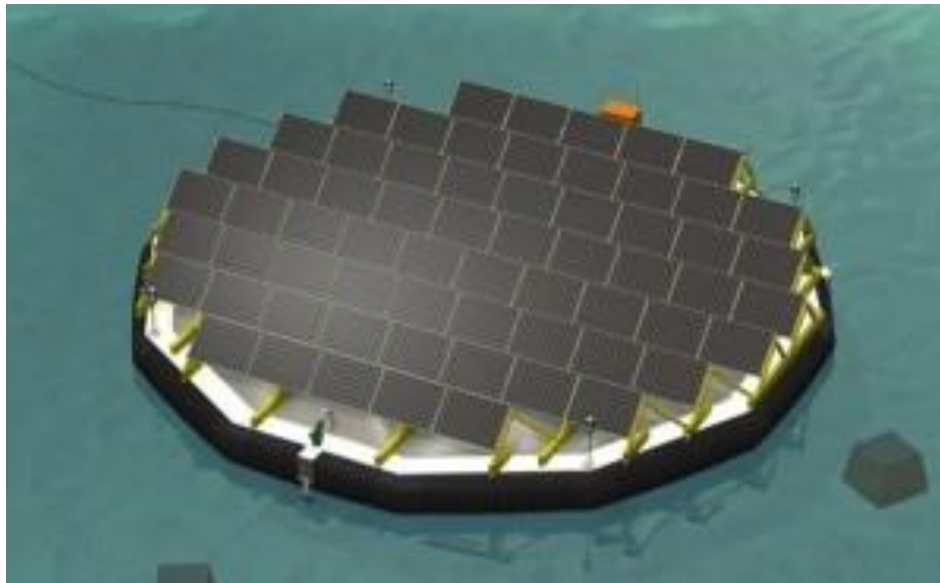


image via Nolaris

The company Viteos put out a [press release](#) in late January – [and PV Tech noticed it](#) – that said it would build the three planned islands, each 25-meters in diameter and with 100 photovoltaic panels of unspecified size, sometimes this summer, and have them in operation no later than 2014.

As Motherboard noted, this concept was the brainchild of Swiss research Thomas Hinderling at the Centre Suisse d'Electronique et de Microtechnique (CSEM) back around 2008. The focus then was on building an island solar thermal system, but an effort to test a prototype in the

United Arab Emirates (of all places) foundered, and Hinderling [turned his focus back](#) to Switzerland with Nolaris.

A key principle appears to remain from the early vision: the platform goes on an “impermeable membrane resting on a cushion of air at a slight overpressure,” according to the Viteos press release. This makes it enables the platform to rotate “220 ° in the direction of the sun during the day and return to its initial position during the night.” Putting this mechanism on an island, Viteos said, increases “the effectiveness of their rotation mechanism according to the lower resistance offered by the water.”

The plan is to put the islands about 150 meters offshore from a wastewater treatment plant in an area where boats are not allowed, and to anchor them to concrete blocks at the lake bottom.

The energy will be sent ashore via cable, but that’s not the real point of the project, according to Viteos. “The goal is not to produce kilowatt or mass at the best price, but to look for alternatives and original innovative deployment of solar panels,” the company said.

We’ll be watching to see what happens.

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