

***PRESS RELEASE***

*30 October 2025*

**Wattlab delivers first full-scale Solar Flatrack installation on coaster MV Vertom Tula**

*After two successful pilots with Wattlab in 3 years Vertom chose to outfit its latest coaster with 79 kWp of installed solar power - the first seagoing vessel to do so*

**Dutch maritime solar innovator Wattlab has delivered a seaworthy solar energy system for globally operating shipping, trading, and maritime services company Vertom. The recently delivered ‘MV Vertom Tula’ is a 7,280 dwt diesel-electric multipurpose cargo vessel. The solar system represents a major technical milestone and a step forward for sustainable shipping. Wattlab has delivered and installed 44 Solar Flatracks that will provide power to onboard systems, reducing 20% of the hotel load.**

Vertom operates a fleet of over 100 vessels, ranging from 1,500 to 12,000 DWT. In addition to Shipping & Trading, Vertom’s portfolio consists of Port Agencies & Freight Forwarding, Maritime Services, Tanker Chartering, and Liner Services.

The company has a strong track record in the Short Sea Shipping market, and aims to operate as sustainable as possible. To understand and test Wattlab’s new technology and benefits, Vertom executed two pilot projects with Wattlab before deciding to fully outfit this newbuild.

**Fast installation**

After production and assembly in September in Wattlab’s brand new production facilities in Rotterdam, the 44 Solar Flatracks were installed onboard within a day in the Port of Harlingen. Bo Salet, co-founder and CEO of Wattlab, explains that the Solar Flatracks can be installed in a minimum amount of time using container twist lock fittings:

“For shipowners, time is money, so speed and ease of use are important. Furthermore, we know that ‘space is money’ too. Hence, should the panels need to be removed to make way for a special type of cargo, the crew can easily stack and store them all on the footprint of one 20ft container.”

He continues: “We thank Vertom for their trust and the smooth collaboration in the past three years. Without them we could not have achieved this milestone; that goes both for the vessel itself as for the technology. We wish the Vertom Tula and its crew fair winds and following seas! In addition, we thank the EU’s Just Transition Fund (JTF), which co-financed this project.”

**Happy crew**

“During the pilots, the test results showed that the Solar Flatrack system performs well in the tough coastal shipping environment,” says Thomas van Meerkerk, Business Development Manager at Vertom. “Based on the results of our own and TNO’s research in the past months, we consider Wattlab’s Solar Flatrack an effective option for reducing GHG and pollutant emissions. Of course, these things also depend on the conditions our vessels operate in, but it’s clear that the system can provide both a positive ROI and contribute to CO₂ reduction in shipping.

Bo adds: “Another benefit is that the panels can stay on the hatch covers during loading and discharging operations. The crew was sceptical at first, fearing a lot of extra work. However, they soon learned that in practice, Solar Flatracks are easy to use and require minimal maintenance. For example, there’s no salt crust formation, because the water can drain freely from the panels.”

**Validation and recognition**

Dutch independent and globally acknowledged research organisation TNO has validated the CO2 emission reduction and ROI time of the system. Their report will be published shortly.

In recent weeks, Solar Flatrack has been nominated for the IBJ Awards, both for the Environmental Protection Award, and the Bulk Ship of the Year Award, together with Vertom.

Bo: “For those wanting to learn more, we welcome clients at our new production hall and office in the Port of Rotterdam. Also, you can meet us at Europort on 4-7 November, Hal 8 Booth 8201, where we will show our Solar Flatrack live for the first time.”

**Scalable solar solutions for coastal vessels**

Having a first full-scale system operational on a coaster marks an important step in the evolution of maritime decarbonisation strategies. With rising regulatory pressure (e.g. FuelEU Maritime, EU ETS) and volatile fuel prices, shipowners and operators are seeking ways to diversify their onboard energy mix. Wattlab’s scalable solar solution now offers a practical and proven solution for coastal and short sea vessels.

This project sets the stage for wider adoption across the sector; delivering emission reductions, fuel savings, and energy resilience without compromising deck space or cargo flexibility.

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***Note for the Editor:***

***JTF Fund -*** *Wattlab’s SolarDeck pilot project has been co-financed by the European Union’s Just Transition Fund (JTF). The JTF is a new instrument of the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027, as the first pillar of the Just Transition Mechanism in the context of the European Green Deal aiming at achieving EU climate-neutrality by 2050.*

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**About Wattlab**

Founded in 2017, Wattlab is a Netherlands-based maritime solar energy specialist dedicated to delivering innovative solar power solutions for the shipping industry. As a pioneer in ‘solar power for shipping’, Wattlab provides fully integrated solar products tailored for both seagoing and inland vessels – including the Solar FlatRack and the SolarHatch. With installations on more than 30 ships worldwide, Wattlab has a proven track record of reducing fuel consumption, cutting carbon dioxide emissions, and improving operational efficiency. The company’s mission is to accelerate the maritime sector’s transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy through the power of solar technology.

Note that in 2024, inland shipping operator HGK’s 135-metre dry cargo vessel MS Helios made The Guinness Book of Records for having the world’s largest solar panel installation on an inland shipping vessel: 312 solar panels.

https://wattlab.nl/