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Maldives Resort Wins Sustainability Award for Keeping Food Waste Off Its Island

RAAYA by Atmosphere says its composting system turns 600 kilograms of organic waste a month into fertilizer, cutting disposal costs by about $2,400.

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RAAYA by Atmosphere, a 167-room resort on a private island in the Raa Atoll of the Maldives, said Thursday that it had received an International Sustainability Award 2026 for its on-site recycling and waste management program, part of a broader push to cut emissions and reduce the amount of garbage sent off the island.

The resort said the award recognized a system introduced in April 2024 that processes all wet organic waste on site. Fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds and eggshells are turned into compost used in the island’s landscaping, while garden waste such as leaves, grass clippings and pruning debris is also recycled instead of discarded. According to the company, the system now converts about 600 kilograms of organic waste into compost each month, and no food waste leaves the island.

For a remote resort in the Maldives, where waste often has to be moved by boat for disposal or treatment elsewhere, the operational impact is significant. RAAYA by Atmosphere said the new approach has reduced the need to transport waste off the island, lowering costs by about $2,400 a month and cutting emissions linked to waste transfers. The resort added that most of its waste is now sorted and handled internally, with a garbage transfer vessel needed only once every two months to carry recyclable materials.

Mario Stanic, the resort’s general manager, said the award reflected a wider effort to make sustainability part of daily operations rather than a separate project. In a statement released by the company, he said the recognition honored the work of the resort team and its efforts to protect the natural environment while maintaining the standards expected at an upscale Maldivian property.

The award also comes as the resort reports a sharp increase in its solar energy use. RAAYA by Atmosphere said solar production rose from 382,856 kilowatt-hours in 2024 to 1,541,286 kilowatt-hours in 2025. The company said solar power now meets 21% of the island’s total energy needs, up from 8% a year earlier. It also reported that the associated reduction in carbon emissions increased from 541 tons to 1,097 tons over the same period.

Those figures point to a central challenge for the hospitality industry in island destinations: how to reconcile energy-intensive resort operations with growing pressure from travelers, regulators and investors to reduce environmental impact. Resorts in the Maldives depend heavily on imported goods, marine transport and constant energy generation, all of which can raise both costs and emissions. Waste disposal is another persistent issue because of the distance between islands and the limited capacity for

treatment on site.

RAAYA by Atmosphere said its recent measures are intended to address some of those pressures directly. In addition to composting food and garden waste, the resort plans to install a glass crusher so that waste glass can be reused in construction, and a green waste shredder to strengthen what the company described as a circular waste management system on the island.

The property is certified by Green Globe, a sustainability certification program used by hotels, resorts and tourism businesses in several markets. The company said the certification supports its broader environmental goals, which include more careful resource use and closer control over the handling of waste produced by guests and operations.

RAAYA by Atmosphere opened as part of the Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts collection, which is owned by Atmosphere Core. The group has a growing presence in the Maldives and India, with additional expansion projects underway in South Asia and Europe. In its announcement, the company linked the award to its wider strategy of combining high-end tourism with stronger environmental management, particularly in destinations where local ecosystems are fragile and logistics are costly.

The resort’s recognition at the International Sustainability Awards follows a period in which hotel groups across the Indian Ocean have put more emphasis on measurable environmental targets rather than broad pledges. In RAAYA’s case, the company presented the award as validation of specific operating results: composting 600 kilograms of organic waste a month, cutting waste transport needs, saving $2,400 monthly, and increasing solar’s share of energy demand to 21%.

RAAYA by Atmosphere said those changes are being built into the daily functioning of the property rather than limited to guest-facing initiatives. The next phase, according to the company, will focus on handling more material on site through new equipment for glass and green waste, with the aim of further reducing the amount of waste that must leave the island by boat.