

**F1 Team cost may run into billions of ringgit**  
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Sepang International Circuit (SIC), a joint partnership involving the government and a consortium of Malaysian entrepreneurs for the 1Malaysia Formula One Team project, has allocated between 8,000 and 12,000 hectares for the development of the Made-in-Malaysia F1 team headquarters.

SIC chief executive officer Ahmad Razlan Ahmad Razali told *Bernama* the headquarters, to be located at the circuit, would be equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, including a wind-tunnel, to test the aerodynamics of the Malaysian-made machines.

He said the headquarters comprising an office, research & development (R&D), manufacturing, technical centre and other related departments would be fully functional, two years after the preliminary works expected to begin by the middle of next year.

"SIC have chosen a suitable site for the team headquarters which will be located at the parking area before the tunnel, to enter the podium building.

"But it's all in the preliminary stages. All the parties involved will have to sit together after the Hari Raya and submit whatever plans we have to the motorsports governing body, the Federation of International Automobile for endorsement," he told *Bernama* today.

**Actual cost could not be revealed yet**

Ahmad Razlan admitted, the cost to build the team headquarters at SIC would involve millions or may be, billions of ringgit, but could not reveal the actual cost because it was still in the preliminary phase.

SIC would only build the physical infrastructure but the hardware and software of the projects would be decided by other parties, he said.

Ahmad Razlan said cooperation between SIC and Air Asia began a few months ago when Asia's low-budget airlines boss Datuk Tony Fernandes told him about his ambitious dream to set up an all Malaysian F1 team.

For SIC, the idea will not only enhance the level of the company's involvement in the motorsports industry but also show Malaysia's direct involvement with F1.

"This is a new chapter for SIC... as organiser of Malaysian F1 race to the niche Home of Motorsports and now, we can boast that we're the hub for motorsports in Asia," said Ahmad Razlan.

Asked if the Malaysian-made machines would be on the grid before the Australian Grand Prix in March next year - the first round of the 2010 F1 calendar - he said the mean-machines would be in Malaysia before the race.

**'We already have Lotus technology'**

"I can assure all Malaysian that the 1Malaysia F1 Team machines will be in this country before the Australian race, most probably for testing at the 5.543km Sepang Circuit.

"We're not building the car from scratch. We already have the Lotus technology for the engines and within three month, the car is fit to be on the road. The Malaysian car has enough time to make a pinnacle for the motorsports industry. That, I can assure them," he said.

He said the team's technical director Mike Gascoyne had over 20 years experience in F1, and previously performed the same role for the Force India, Toyota, Renault and Jordan Formula One Teams.

Meanwhile, National Sports Institute director-general Dr Ramlan Abd Aziz said the institute was willing to share its expertise with the budding F1 drivers.

He said former national F1 driver Alex Yoong used to undergo physical training under the institute's supervision as F1 drivers needed to be physically and mentally ready.

"If necessary, we will set up a team comprising experts to help in the training.

"However, before we provide any assistance, we must get the green light from the Youth and Sports Ministry," added Ramlan.

- *Bernama*

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