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Malaysia's robotics firm, DF Automation & Robotics raises funding from MTDC

By Karamjit Singh April 12, 2022

- *Has 15 IP including 4 patent pending, with customers across the world*
- *Planning for next funding with bigger and more premium products*



Dr Yeong Che Fai (far left), chairmand and co-founder of DF Automation & Robotics with Norhalim Yunus, MTDC CEO (in blue).

DF Automation & Robotics Sdn Bhd, one of the leading robotics companies in Malaysia with over 15 Intellectual Properties, four of which are patent pending applications, and a global customer base from Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Mexico, Malta and UK, recently received the Business Growth Fund (BGF) from Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC).

Declining to reveal the amount, although successful BGF recipients are known to accumulate up to US\$2.36 million (RM10 million) per company, the funding will be used for its global expansion, primarily the setting up of a branch in India as well as to increase inventory to speed up the sales cycle. Besides funding, DF is also getting business advisory services from MTDC.

DF designs and develops industrial mobile robots called Autonomous Mobile Robot (AMR) and Automated Guided Vehicle (AGV) for industries which help reduce reliance on manual labour and to improve material handling in a factory.

It was co-founded by a trio of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia alumni, Dr Yeong Che Fai, Ricky Yap Wee Yang and Tan Ping Hua in 2012, where Yeong is also serving as an Associate Professor. In the past 10 years since inception, DF has grown from strength to strength, with more than 65 staff developing multiple robotic products.



The DF Automation team standing proud.

Norhalim Yunus, MTDC CEO said, "We are collaborating with several stakeholders to develop local robotics companies as well as other companies supporting the Industry 4.0 pillars. Investment is one of the ways for MTDC to help in assisting their growth besides other services including financial, marketing and business advisory services and training. DF Automation was one of the proactive robotics companies that MTDC helped to collaborate with Hospital Tunku Muhriz UKM to develop and test the hospital delivery robot system, the MCK19 or more famously Makcik Kiah!"

Norhalim says the agency looks forward to assist DF to reach the next level in the field of automation and robotics. MTDC envisages that with the networks and resources available from other larger and mature companies within the MTDC ecosystem and also listed entities, DF will be able to forge ahead and grow tremendously.

MTDC is a wholly-owned company of Khazanah Nasional Bhd and as an agency under Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) was established in March 1992.

Yeong, DF Chairman and cofounder said, "We are honoured and grateful that MTDC believes in us. DF wants to extend our utmost appreciation to the MTDC team supporting our wild quest to be the leading robotics company in Malaysia and a trusted global brand."

DF has benefited from the pandemic which impressed upon the corporate world the importance of robotics in various sectors, particularly in manufacturing, automotive and warehousing. Stressing that DF needs to move fast and strategically to stay competitive and seize market opportunity, it will be challenging to grow at a fast pace without a good and strategic partner. Hence DF is already planning for its next investment round.

"We are planning for the expansion of the current 17,000 sq ft factory. To support our upcoming new products which are bigger and more premium, we foresee a need for a factory size of between 35,000 sq ft -50,000 sq ft."

DF has previously secured funding from Cradle Fund, MOSTI Technofund, [ECF PitchIN](#) where in 2019 it raised US\$709,000 (RM3 million) from 177 investors, NTIS, MIDA Industry4wrld Intervention Fund and angel investors for DF's growth in research, development and commercialisation.