MACHINERY

NFT implement RFID solution fo fleet managem

By Anirban Bagchi

Posted on September 2

deal with UK-based solution provider will improve inventory

management and asset evaluation in post-Covid environment

Tower crane specialist NFT has announced a deal with a UK-based company and its UAE local representative to track its large fleet of tower cranes using Radio Frequency Identification Device

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(RFID) solutions.

NFT, the largest Potain dealer in the world, said in a statement that with the solution, all its tower cranes, construction hoists and their respective parts and accessories are tagged and then linked to an asset tracking and management software.

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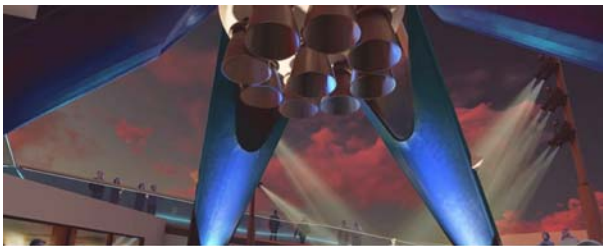

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This in turn is then integrated with NFT's software solution for inventory management and asset evaluation.

The company said the new facility provided under the deal with the UK-based company, which was concluded in December 2019, is even more relevant now

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in the Covid-19 scenario, with its statement adding: “If the Covid-19 pandemic has done anything, it’s to accelerate the need for businesses to embrace digital transformation.”

Amer Sneij, plant manager at NFT, said: “Having the world’s leading fleet of tower

cranes spread across 300,000sqm calls for an automated way of tracking our assets. Relying on a manual/offline solution was fine 20 something years ago when we had just a few hundred cranes spread across three medium-sized yards, but today with 2,500 tower

cranes, 500 hoists, 10,000-plus accessory types and a warehouse filled with spare parts, the old way has become a challenge.”

With an average turnover of one crane delivered per day and catering to multiple destinations worldwide, technology has become a necessity

for NFT. Nagham Al Zahlawi, deputy general manager, explained: “The objective is to minimise human error and wastage while optimising inventory managing, strategic planning and ‘real time’ decision making. IoT, RFID, Asset Tracking have all become standard in the construction, logistics and oil

& gas industries. We believe that NFT's strategy for modernisation and compliance with international standards of trading, allows it to be in the perfect position to adopt this technology and benefit from its operational efficiencies and cost saving."

A customised cloud-based

system has been developed from scratch to match NFT's process of fleet tracking, storing, loading, inspecting, assembling, mobilising and re-stocking. For example, to avoid loading tower crane parts on trucks or containers without any missing piece, an automated gate barrier at the

workshop only opens when the reader scans all parts on board and signals that it's good to go.

"This was an important feature to add because the worst thing that can happen on site during installation is for us to deliver a

crane part with a piece missing, like a pin. It can halt the entire installation, delaying the project for the client," added Sneij.

Once the workflow was developed, two tagging teams were assigned to complete the job on the ground. The teams

comprise a logistics manager, two logistics supervisors, two welders and four logistics helpers. The teams have successfully tagged 200 tower cranes from July to September 2020 and aim to complete Phase 1 by Q1 2021. The next phase will be to track all

construction hoists.

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MACHINERY

Acciona develops platform f monitorin earthmovi operations

By Anirban Bagchi

Posted on September 2

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Digital tool, compatible with any manufacturer, analyses and controls earthmoving machinery to optimise operations and improve productivity

Acciona has developed a digital earthmoving platform which provides systematic monitoring and control of the machinery used for earthmoving operations, optimising these processes and improving productivity of the projects carried out by the company.

The new tool is compatible with any manufacturer and can be implemented on projects carried out with Acciona's own machinery or on projects that use subcontracted machinery, said the sustainable solutions infrastructure company in a statement.

Acciona added that the first step in operating this digital platform, which was developed through its Construction Technology Centre, is to compile data from monitoring all of the machinery, which is possible thanks to a GPS system that can be installed simply and non-invasively on each piece of machinery.

The operator of each machine has the option to enter different operational data using an app and can also record other parameters (consumption, etc.) by installing an additional device, as well as directly extracting data from the machine itself via the manufacturer's API.

The next step is to process the data collected by the devices. Different events can then be defined using a variety of algorithms, such as the start or end of loading, allowing activities to be identified and performance data to be calculated.

Lastly, the production, time, distance, volume and performance data

that has been processed can be analysed and displayed via a web interface. This makes it possible to measure progress and control the operations, as well as to generate regular customised macro reports according to the user's needs.

José Luis Oliván, project director, Acciona Middle East Construction, said: "By using the earthmoving platform developed by Acciona, users can see all of the assets in real time, including their precise location using positioning maps, as well as the status of each machine. I am sure this innovative tool will be implemented very soon in our coming projects in the region to optimise control of project costs and times, early detection of variations and optimising the machinery use."

The tool also enables a comprehensive production calculation that shows the duration of different activities, the distances covered and routes used, the volumes excavated or

materials moved, as well as many other types of data. This information is represented by graphs and tables for easy understanding.

Acciona added that its use allows analysis of the efficiency of different subcontractors, vehicles or operating zones, as historical data can be processed and presented as performance indicators. Similarly, the platform allows the actual progress of each task to be compared to its initial planning, by displaying the volumes moved using a diagram showing mass.

Other major benefits of this tool include setting up alerts and sending notifications based on productivity thresholds or limits for other user-configured parameters. The platform also stores the historical data for use on future projects to improve a variety of aspects, such as time or cost estimates for certain tasks, or setting performance indicators for subcontractors.

Acciona is already using the platform on one of

its most iconic projects – the construction of the Puhoi-Warkworth highway in New Zealand. The platform has also been used on other works, such as in the construction of the Nokian Tyres Technology Centre in Spain, and a section of highway in Font La Figuera.

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