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Abu Dhabi, UAE-based tower crane specialist NFT finalised a deal with a UK company in December 2019 to track its fleet of tower cranes using Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) solution. From July to September 2020, 200 tower cranes have been successfully tagged.

All of NFT's tower cranes, construction hoists, parts and accessories will be tagged and then linked to an asset tracking system and management software. This in turn is integrated with NFT's inventory management and asset evaluation systems.

“Having the world's leading fleet of tower cranes spread across 300,000 sqm calls for an automated way of tracking our asset,” said plant manager Amer Sneij. “Relying on a manual/offline solution was fine twenty-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 to multiple destinations worldwide, technology has become a necessity for NFT. “The objective is to minimize human error and wastage while optimizing inventory managing, strategic planning and real time decision making. IoT, RFID, Asset Tracking have become standard in the construction, logistics and oil and 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.” added Nagham Al Zahlawi, deputy general manager.

A custom cloud-based system has been developed to match NFT’s process of fleet tracking, storing, loading, inspecting, assembling, mobilising and re-stocking. For example, 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 worse 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 holt the entire installation, delaying the project for the client” added Sneij.

Once the workflow was developed, two tagging teams comprising a logistics manager, two logistics supervisors, two welders and four logistics helpers were assigned to complete the job on the ground.

