

PRESS RELEASE

Survey: One Third of Mobile Operators Will Deploy 5G Standalone within Two Years

Global mobile operator survey reveals operators' plans for 5G SA, edge deployments and a common network data layer

Stockholm, March 12th, 2020 – 37 percent of mobile operators say they will begin deploying 5G standalone (SA) within the next two years, according to a new worldwide survey of 41 mobile operators released today by [Enea](#). The survey reveals how operators are addressing 5G architecture, edge deployment, and a network data layer.

The survey shows that 27 percent of operators will deploy 5G SA within 12-18 months with a further 10 percent within 24 months. With the maturity of 3GPP standards, such as the Release 16 freeze in March 2020, operators now see a clear path to 5G SA infrastructure. The overall timeline is supported by a total of 49 percent of operators who plan to deploy 5G SA within the next four years.

Answers show that operators choose different strategies when it comes to the edge. 85 percent of operators are planning edge deployments at some point, but more than half of the operators in the survey have no strategy for doing so. 32 percent are going only with limited, specific use cases such as smart factories, smart cities, or retail, while others are holding off until the business case for edge deployment becomes more viable.

The survey also includes a section about the network data layer which serves as single point of storage for all data about subscriptions, network services, devices, and connections in a 5G network. Responses show that more than 50 percent of operators plan to move to a common network data layer across their network functions as they roll out 5G. Only 2 percent choose to keep vendor specific data storage, indicating that the time has come to make architectural choices.

“Operators are beginning to firm up plans for how they will implement flexible, multi-vendor service architectures that enable them to deploy and monetize their 5G networks and differentiate their services” said Sue Rudd, Director, Networks and Service Platforms, Strategy Analytics. “The survey indicates that several operators have figured out how to deploy SA in the next couple of years. This could be as ‘islands’ of 5G radio access with a 5G SA core for special services, starting late 2021.”

Operators in the survey also listed the most important factors for choosing a network data layer. The top three are: gaining a unified view of customer data, the ability to deploy in slices or at the edge, and the ability to monetize subscriber data.

“We’ve now entered a phase where operators plan to deploy a 5G SA core as the next step after introducing 5G radio access running on existing 4G core,” said Jan Häglund, President and CEO at Enea. “It is interesting to see that most operators have identified the benefits of a common 5G data management layer that serves as the backend for all their network applications.”

[Register](#) for a complimentary copy of “*Worldwide mobile operator survey – 5G Data Management*” detailing the research findings and a discussion on their implications.

Links

Worldwide mobile operator survey – 5G Data Management

<https://landing.owmobility.com/5g-mobile-operator-survey/>

5G Data Management

<https://www.enea.com/products/5gdata/>

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