

Gartner: Smartphones Return to Growth in 2020

Written by Frederick Douglas
30. January 2020

According to Gartner, global smartphone sales are to reach 1.57 billion units in 2020, a 3% increase over 2019. Last year smartphone sales saw a -2% decline, the first since 2008.

Table 1:

Worldwide Smartphone Sales to End Users by Region, 2019-2021 (Thousands of Units)

Region	2019	2020	2021
Eastern Europe	48,468	48,532	49,121
Emerging Asia/Pacific	363,643	376,784	396,394
Eurasia	48,612	50,915	52,860
Greater China	411,351	432,328	426,002
Japan	31,866	32,273	33,027
Latin America	129,830	125,635	122,963
Mature Asia/Pacific	30,095	31,802	31,234
Middle East and North Africa	73,872	78,226	75,604
North America	152,857	155,350	158,618
Sub-Saharan Africa	90,103	91,917	93,169
Western Europe	144,141	147,457	150,206
Total	1,524,838	1,571,219	1,589,198

Source: Gartner (January 2020)

“2019 was a challenging year for smartphone vendors, primarily due to oversupply in the high-end sector in mature markets and longer replacement cycles overall,” the analyst says. “However, in 2020, the market is expected to rebound with the introduction of 5G network coverage in more countries and as users who may have delayed their smartphone purchases until 2020 in expectation of price reductions begin buying again.”

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Gartner forecasts 2020 5G smartphone sales will total 221 million, or 12% of overall sales, before more than doubling in 2021 to 489m units. The commercialisation of 5G phones is set to accelerate in 2020, and an increasing number of 5G phones costing under \$300 will further push the sales growth of such devices until it exceeds that of 4G phones over 12 months.

On a regional perspective, MEA has the highest growth rate of 2020 at 5.9%. As mentioned earlier, strong demand for 5G phones, not to mention a first 5G iPhone, will bolster smartphone demand. As such, all eyes at the upcoming MWC 2020 will be on 5G devices at either end of the price scale, and the key focus for vendors will be 5G access and the enhancement of the cameras inside such devices.

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