MEC: *U.S. Mobile Operator Spending, 2018-2026*

Market Study
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Abstract

Mobile operators are preparing their networks for 5G. Part of that process includes moving to software defined networking (SDN), network function virtualization (NFV). Multi-access edge computing (MEC) and Central Office Re-architected as a Data Center (CORD) are two sub-sets of the overall shift away from the traditional network architecture to one that looks more like a data center.

MEC emerged on the wireless industry stage several years ago. It has the potential to be as disruptive a technology as anything that is being discussed today – 5G New Radio, NFV/SDN, C-RAN, etc. In fact, MEC is quite likely to help realize the promise of 5G.

CORD also emerged several years ago. The goal behind CORD is to take all of the equipment in today's central office (CO) and disaggregate the hardware and software components, virtualize the software and run it on commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) hardware. As with MEC, CORD – and its mobile-specific version (M-CORD) – is also likely to help operators deliver on 5G networks.

This report models and forecasts what U.S. mobile operators will spend putting in MEC into their networks. M-CORD is discussed because it is a related technology platform and, should M-CORD gather steam, they will likely be deployed alongside each other.

Moreover, both CORD and MEC are aspects of the same concept – network equipment and software moving from proprietary platforms to (open source) software running on COTS hardware.

Note that this report details the MEC spending by mobile operators on MEC for their own networks – a partner report by *iG*R details the spending on MEC in the enterprise segment.

Key questions addressed in this market study include:

- What is MEC?
- How does MEC work?
- How does MEC relate to other edge computing initiatives, such as OpenFog, CORD Project, Open Edge Computing (OEC), Open Compute, and EdgeX Foundry?
- What can be done with MEC?
- What are some of the perceived benefits and issues related to MEC?

- What are the key drivers for implementing MEC?
- What is CORD and M-CORD?
- How do CORD and M-CORD work?
- What can be done with CORD and M-CORD?
- What are some of the perceived benefits and issues related to CORD and M-CORD?
- How much mobile operator spending is likely to occur on MEC-based solutions?

Who should read this report?

- Mobile operators
- Infrastructure OEMs
- Computing infrastructure OEMs
- Small cell product and solution vendors
- Backhaul service providers and equipment OEMs
- Financial analysts and investors.