

Sweden's Enea tackles 4G/5G vendor lock-in



News Analysis

[ANNE MORRIS](#), Contributing Editor, Light Reading

7/7/2021

Sweden-based [Enea](#) has been around for a while, it's fair to say. The data communications and software specialist was founded in 1965, and its claims to fame include the fact that Sweden's first email was sent over the Internet to Enea in 1983. In the 1990s, the Enea operating system, OSE, was used in Ericsson's new GSM system.

Fast forward to the present day, and Enea is now putting much of its energies into helping 4G and 5G operators to resolve complex challenges when it comes to connecting all manner of customers and things, and with a focus on open standards.

It has been able to do this following the 2019 integration of 4G and 5G technology specialist Openwave Mobility to form Enea Openwave.



Core considerations: Enea's virtualized data schema lets operators work with 4G systems and the 5G core.

(Source: [S. Hermann & F. Richter](#) from [Pixabay](#))

The Swedish supplier was also [shortlisted](#) for Light Reading's "Most Innovative 5G Technology" in 2020, impressing the judges with its Unified Data Manager (UDM).

The company said the offering can support up to 10 billion data entries at a rate of 1 to 500,000 transactions per second. At the time, Enea boasted that its UDM offering can also run across legacy 4G platforms as well as new software- and cloud-architected 5G offerings.

Enea has now gone a step further in its ambition to address 4G and 5G connectivity challenges. This week, [it announced the creation of a "virtualized data schema,"](#) which it said gives mobile operators the ability to map 4G and 5G data models into a single customizable view from the 5G core to the edge.

The benefit of this, Enea said, is that it allows operators to launch and onboard new use cases such as edge computing, network slicing and IoT, "while interworking seamlessly with 4G systems and the 5G core."

The vendor indicated that the solution was developed for the [Enea Stratum](#) network data layer, which it said was designed to solve "the problem of vendor lock-in by collapsing all your vendor data silos into one common network data layer."

Taking back control

According to Roland Steiner, senior vice president for telecoms at Enea, it's all about enabling operators to take back control of their own data and networks and get rid of those pesky vendor lock-ins.

"Data is at the heart of 5G, and operators need genuine agility to maximize their potential," said Steiner.

"But network providers have struggled to manage 4G and 5G data on their own terms. Our virtualized 5G core data management solution gives ownership of data back to operators so they can take back control of their data and their network."

It explains further: "Unlike service-based architecture in the 5G core, 4G lacks the standards that separate data and functions. As a result, mobile operators have been at the mercy of their infrastructure vendor, with added data management costs when they needed to make system changes to launch new 5G services with legacy 4G data systems."

Enea said the open standard virtual schema, which it notes is based on 3GPP guidelines, unlocks the data path, allowing operators to manage and control both 5G and 4G data.

Enea also made reference to research by ABI Research on vendor lock-ins and the importance of distributed data platforms in the 5G core.

Dimitris Mavrakis, senior research director at ABI, noted that operators want to enter the enterprise market with 5G and use artificial intelligence and machine learning to monetize a variety of use cases.

"Yet 4G/5G centralized data platforms have been a major pain point for operators with proprietary and centralized databases that did not scale," Mavrakis said.

"A growing number of operators including AT&T, Telenor, Telefonica, Orange and Vodafone have implemented significant upgrades to their data platform strategies. More operators will deploy virtualized, distributed systems in line with their cloud-native strategies."