

Telenor signs up Enea for its multi-vendor SA 5G project



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Norwegian operator group Telenor is striving to create the world's most diverse standalone 5G core and software vendor Enea is the latest addition to the project.

Enea's contribution focuses on its 5G data management solutions, with the initiative working towards the production of a proof of concept of a fully secure cloud-native 5G Core for network slicing. Telenor announced its SA 5G solution a month ago, which seems to be a bid to develop the equivalent of OpenRAN in the core.

"The main component of 5G-SA is the 5G mobile core, the 'brain' of the 5G system," said Patrick Waldemar, Telenor Research Head of Technology, at the time. "Unfortunately, most 5G core deployments are still single vendor dependent, with strong dependencies on that vendor's underlying proprietary architecture. This single-vendor dependency can be a killer for innovation. It restricts open collaboration from the broader 5G ecosystem of companies developing new technology, use cases, and services that the market expects."

"It has been a privilege to partner with Telenor and showcase our capabilities in this ground-breaking project," said Indranil Chatterjee, Chief Customer Officer at Enea, of the latest development. "The initiative provides a blueprint for both operators and enterprises to create a cloud native, best-of-breed 5G environment that, by its multi-vendor nature, eliminates vendor lock-in."

This initiative slipped under the radar somewhat, but it seems to have potential. Given the intense political pressure to diversify the choice of vendors in the RAN, it stands to reason that the same logic should apply to the core too. Once this is all tried and tested, perhaps Telenor will follow Rakuten's lead and license the platform to everyone else.