

Africa is expected to have 720 million smartphones by 2020

The number of smartphone connections in Africa has increased rapidly over the last six years. According to the 2016 Mobile Economy Africa report by GSMA, the number of smartphones in Africa is expected to grow to 720 million by 2020, a 46% increase from 494 million in 2015. Based on these projections, smartphone connections will account for 57% of total mobile connections in Africa by 2020. This rise in smartphone adoption is expected to lead to increased mobile data traffic and increased revenue generation for data service providers.

Among four of Africa's economic regions (ECOWAS, EAC, ECCAS and SADC), data shows that SADC has the highest smartphone penetration rate at 24% (2015) and this figure is projected to rise to 57% by 2020. All the other economic blocs are also projected to break the 50% barrier by 2020. This positive outlook is partially driven by a significant fall in the average cost of smartphones throughout Africa; on average, the cost of a smartphone in Africa has dropped from US\$230 in 2012 to US\$160 in 2015.

