

GSMA™

**Intelligence**

---

# IoT connections forecast: the impact of Covid-19

June 2020

© 2020 GSM Association



The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting more than 750 operators with nearly 400 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset and device makers, software companies, equipment providers and internet companies, as well as organisations in adjacent industry sectors. The GSMA also produces the industry-leading MWC events held annually in Barcelona, Los Angeles and Shanghai, as well as the Mobile 360 Series of regional conferences.

For more information, please visit the GSMA corporate website at [www.gsma.com](http://www.gsma.com)

Follow the GSMA on Twitter: [@GSMA](https://twitter.com/GSMA)

### **Authors**

Sylwia Kechiche, Principal Analyst

Alex Gharibian, Analyst

# GSMA<sup>™</sup> **Intelligence**

GSMA Intelligence is the definitive source of global mobile operator data, analysis and forecasts, and publisher of authoritative industry reports and research. Our data covers every operator group, network and MVNO in every country worldwide – from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. It is the most accurate and complete set of industry metrics available, comprising tens of millions of individual data points, updated daily.

GSMA Intelligence is relied on by leading operators, vendors, regulators, financial institutions and third-party industry players, to support strategic decision-making and long-term investment planning. The data is used as an industry reference point and is frequently cited by the media and by the industry itself.

Our team of analysts and experts produce regular thought-leading research reports across a range of industry topics.

[www.gsmaintelligence.com](http://www.gsmaintelligence.com)

[info@gsmaintelligence.com](mailto:info@gsmaintelligence.com)

1

Executive summary

2

Overall market environment

3

Effects of Covid-19 on IoT

4

The vertical view

5

Appendix: definitions

- 1 Macroeconomic forces at play** – Forecasting the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on IoT is difficult due to the unknowns around the extent of the crisis. Our forecast is based on the views held by most macroeconomic analysts, who see a contraction of the global economy in 2020 and a recovery in 2021.
- 2 The overall IoT market impact varies by vertical and geography** – Asia Pacific will be the least affected due to strong government support. The overall impact will be a mix of a short-term decline in demand and a longer term move towards the digital transformation of enterprises. We forecast total IoT connections to reach 24.0 billion in 2025, compared to our previous forecast of 24.6 billion. Net additions will contract by 45% in 2020.
- 3 The consumer IoT market looks relatively resilient in the long term** – We do not foresee consumers giving up their connected devices, but we do forecast a lengthening of upgrade cycles across several device categories. Connected vehicles will be the most impacted vertical in consumer IoT, due to a slowdown in new car sales and stronger moves towards the sharing economy.
- 4 Upside for the enterprise IoT market** – The current crisis has shown that agility and business continuity are key. Enterprises will continue their digital transformation journeys but at a slower pace. Smart city and smart building adoption will be the most negatively affected, followed by utilities. The current crisis will also reshape retail, manufacturing and health.
- 5 Licenced cellular IoT continues to support devices requiring mobility** – Licenced LPWA (NB-IoT and LTE-M) technologies are still overcoming the challenges that have slowed adoption so far.