

Network & IT

Aduna's Peter Arbitter explains API JV is 'not in it for the money'

Dawn Bushaus | 6 October 2026

- **Special Report #3/4.**
- Ericsson-backed joint venture Aduna created to give developers an easier way to access telcos' network APIs globally.
- But business is discovering that aggregation is only part of its job.
- JV wrestling with performance, getting operators to expose enough useful APIs, and turning the interest using them into telco revenue.



Aduna's Peter Arbitter explains API JV is 'not in it for the money'

Aduna's Peter Arbitter has a t-shirt emblazoned with the phrase: *"We're not in it for the money"*.

That may sound like an odd message coming from the Chief Commercial Officer of a joint venture (JV) created to help telcos monetise their networks, but it helps explain Aduna's unique business model. *"Aduna was not set up to generate additional profit. It was set up to ensure that control gets back to the telco industry"*, Arbitter told *TelcoTitans* during an interview in August.

"I got quoted that this weird Peter Arbitter says something like, 'We are not in it for the money'. I love that I got quoted like that. I have actually a shirt... because it really describes that this is a different business model approach."

Arbitter.

Announced in 2024 and formally established as a 50/50 JV in 2025, Aduna is half-owned by Ericsson, with the remainder shared among twelve operators: AT&T, Bharti Airtel, Deutsche Telekom (DT), KDDI, Orange, Reliance Jio, Singtel, Telefónica, Telstra, T-Mobile US, Verizon, and Vodafone.

Arbitter understands the operator side of the network API business intimately. Before joining Aduna in March 2025, he spent nearly a decade at DT, where he helped establish its group-wide *Magenta API* business in 2023. By the time he left DT, he had end-to-end responsibility for the network API exposure business.

Aduna is not aiming to become another intermediary that adds its own margin to every API transaction, said Arbitter. Its goal is to make operators' network capabilities easier to buy and consume across multiple networks, which hopefully will increase usage and generate more revenue for the telcos supplying the network APIs.

"You don't have to monetise on two layers if you can ensure that your one layer can be reached faster, easier, and better."

Arbitter.

What is Aduna?

While Aduna is often described as a network API aggregator, Eureka Cosey, Assistant Vice-President (AVP) of Digital Solutions at AT&T, thinks that description misses an important part of its role. “*We call Aduna more of a **normalisation layer***”, she told *TelcoTitans*, explaining that even when operators follow the same CAMARA specifications, their implementations can vary. “*We run our businesses different. We built our networks different. How we deliver a solution is probably going to be different*”, she said.

Aduna also gives operators a common way of taking those capabilities to market. Cosey highlighted the **significance of arch-rivals AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile US agreeing to work** through the same framework. “*It’s very unique to get three carriers to agree to do anything*”, she laughed, adding that the speed at which the operators have been able to bring network APIs to market makes Aduna a “*very unique kind of business proposition*”.

Leonard Lee, an independent analyst and founder of neXt Curve, prefers to use the term “*exchange*” when characterising Aduna. “*They’re structured in a very similar fashion to stock and commodity exchange organisations*”, he explained. “*They don’t necessarily create the market, but they provide that essential... service to **harmonise and enable markets to scale***”.

For his part, Arbitter sees the terminology as less important than Aduna’s mandate, which is to “***unify the individual exposure approaches to one***” and make life easier for the developers consuming them. “*Like working with a hyperscaler, where you just have one Microsoft, one AWS, or one Google, you don’t have one telco. You have hundreds*”, he said.

Scale only works if operators align

While connecting more telco partners to the Aduna exchange is important, it won’t necessarily produce the scale developers need, according to Arbitter. “*This developer community needs this API not just in one market; they need it in the most relevant... minimum ten to 20 markets, let’s say, for them to be interested*”, he explained.

That requires operators to align their API roadmaps because having five APIs available in the USA is of limited value if operators in Germany, France, and the UK prioritise different capabilities. And without that consistency, Arbitter warned that developers will turn elsewhere.

“They have alternatives. You don’t need to use network APIs.”

Arbitter.

When *TelcoTitans* spoke with Arbitter, Aduna was up and running in just nine countries out of a planned 20 by year-end. *"We have not given up on the 20. We just... are realising that it takes a little longer than expected"*, he acknowledged.

Even so, Arbitter believes network APIs have passed an important milestone. During a panel at *DTW Ignite* in June, he noted that commercial deployments are increasing. *"I think we are now at that tipping point where we have moved away from concepts, PowerPoint and theory, and we are seeing live implementations with real traffic"*, Arbitter said. *"And this is what, at the end of the day counts. Show me the money"*.

'We are not good enough'

During that panel discussion, which included GSMA Head of Networks Henry Calvert and Dr Chathurangi Wickramasinghe, who succeeded Arbitter as Senior VP of Magenta API Capability Exposure, there was agreement that there is demand for network APIs, but the trio differed on how far the market has progressed.

Calvert insisted that there is *"pent-up"* demand from several industries, including aviation, logistics, fintech, healthcare, retail, and entertainment. When Wickramasinghe was asked whether DT is seeing such demand, she replied: *"Absolutely, we see the demand"*.

But she added that real scale will come only when developers treat network API integration as a *"natural part of their application stack"* and businesses are repeatedly seeing value from them.

Arbitter was more cautious, drawing a distinction between interest and demand. *"Interest [in APIs]... has to be then transferred into concrete demand so that someone is also willing to pay for that"*, he emphasised.

Arbitter put much of the responsibility for closing that gap back on telcos. *"We are not good enough. We need to be faster in exposing APIs"*, he said, pointing out that a fraud-prevention system could potentially draw on many more trusted signals than the handful currently being provided by operators.

That gap is also pushing Aduna to do more than aggregation. The JV is talking to enterprises about the problems they need to solve, identifying potential use-cases, and taking those requirements back to operators. *"If I'm sitting in front of an enterprise customer, a bank, and we talk fraud prevention, they don't care about which API, whatever"*, Arbitter said during the interview with *TelcoTitans*. *"They have a problem. You need to find a solution, and you better not use your own language"*.

Wickramasinghe also sees a marketing role for Aduna. *"They have a good chance to talk to the customers"*, she told *TelcoTitans*, noting those prospects include CPaaS providers, systems integrators, hyperscalers, and *"enterprise customers"*. However, in her view the JV will be most effective in going to market through channel partners that are already selling into enterprises.

Addressing performance issues

Getting operators connected to Aduna has exposed another challenge that Arbitter admits he did not anticipate: network APIs do not always perform as well as expected once they go live. *"I'm surprised how many quality challenges we run into after we get the API exposed"*, he said.

The issues include slow API response time and lower-than-expected API call success rates. None of the issues is insurmountable, Arbitter stressed, but addressing them has contributed to deployments taking longer than expected.

The problems have less to do with the technical specifications themselves and more to do with the complexity of telcos' operational environments, he added.

He credited CAMARA and the GSMA certification process with reducing the variations that operators can introduce while acknowledging that even with the standards individual implementations can vary. *"That simple API – it's just one line of code you're calling and getting something back in return – triggers quite a lot of functions underneath"*, Arbitter explained. So, where one operator might need to call three network functions to fulfil a request, another might need to call seven, depending on how its network has evolved and the mix of equipment it operates.

As GSMA's Calvert noted, performance requirements can also vary substantially depending on who is consuming the API. A digital platform using a *Number Verification* API to streamline customer authentication may be satisfied with a response that takes a couple of seconds, but a financial institution using the same network capability as part of a real-time fraud decision requires dramatically lower latency. That means operators may have to optimise their back-end systems for different customer requirements, which takes time.

The unexpected quality problems have reinforced and expanded Aduna's value proposition, according to Arbitter. It's better to fix an operator's implementation once through a common exposure layer than to have multiple channel partners independently discover the same issues and attempt to resolve them individually, he explained. *"We are generating a lot of value by fixing these things once"*, said Arbitter.

Ultimately, he said, Aduna's goal is to ensure that promising use-cases can be *"translated into real business"*. He explained: *"We need to identify these use-cases, bring them to the carriers and then ensure that the supply side is also ready and that it's not just a theoretical exercise or proof of concept"*.

And there is some urgency. Arbitter pointed to markets where governments and enterprises have found alternative solutions to network APIs. In Australia, for example, operators moved too slowly to address the government's age verification requirements for users of social media and banks filled the gap. *"It's a timing question"*, he said. *"You can't miss chances if they happen"*.