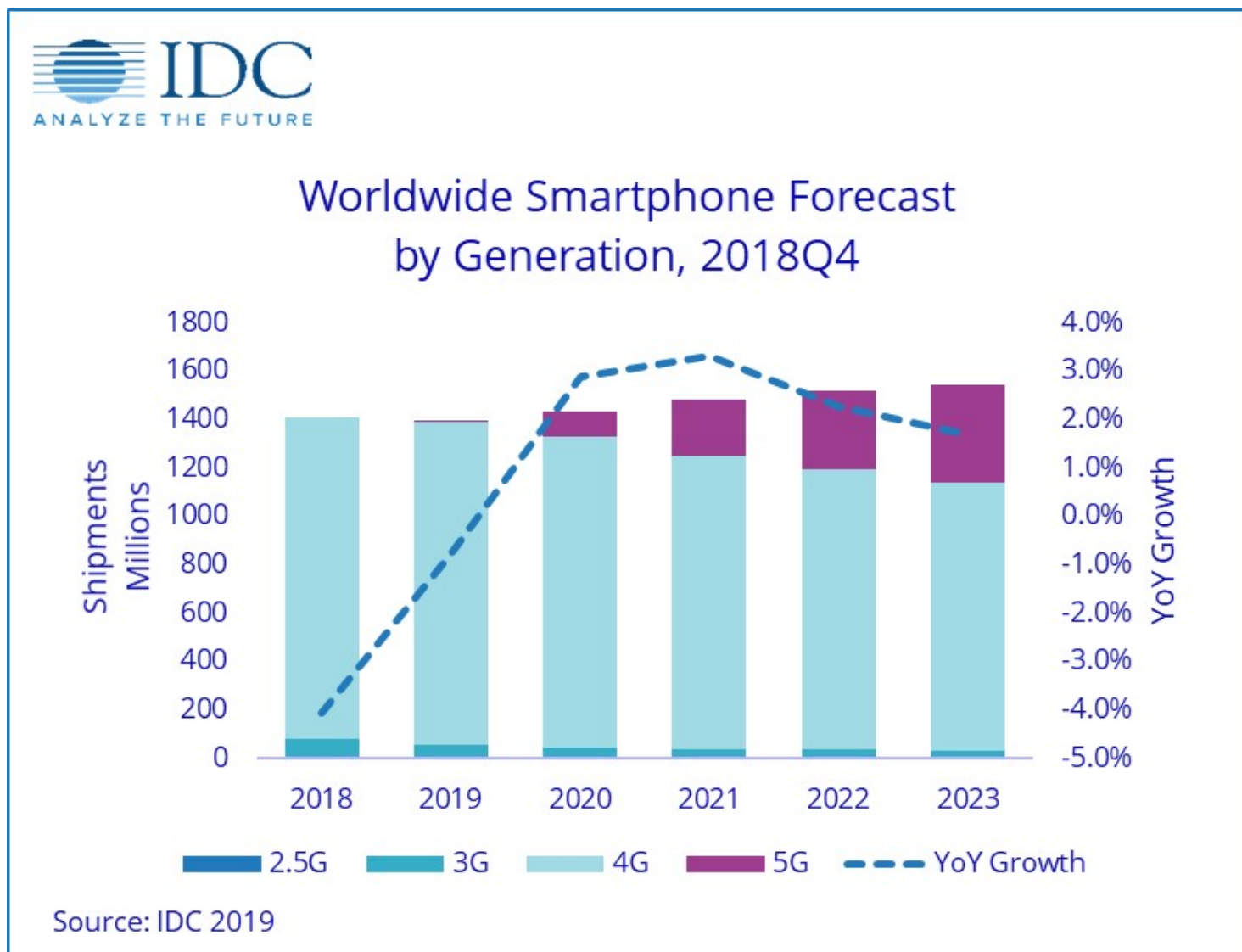


The smartphone market remains challenged in 2019, IDC reports-- so much so the market will experience a 3rd consecutive drop in annual shipments, as volumes fall by -0.8% in 2019 to reach 1.39 billion.

However the analyst does expect the market to pick up momentum in the year, with H2 2019 showing 2.3% Y-o-Y shipment growth. Over the long term, smartphone shipments are forecast to reach 1.54bn in 2023.



"The biggest question that remains unanswered is what will bring the smartphone industry back to growth," the analyst says. "There is no question industry growth has been down for reasons that have already been identified-- longer replacement cycles, a challenged China market, and geopolitical headwinds-- but it is shortsighted to overlook the possibilities of some important technology advancements that are within reach with 5G probably being the most significant."

The current year should witness a new high for technological innovation through the introduction of foldable devices and 5G smartphones. The buzz around 5G is still early, but should ramp up quickly. The use cases for upgrading to a 5G device/service are still clear, but IDC predicts adoption will attain "significant" numbers after 2019. In fact, the analyst expects 5G smartphones will account for 25% of global smartphone shipments by 2023.

"Though the 5G developments and foldable screen buzz is yet to have a reality check from users, 2019 will be surely marked as a year of modernisation in the smartphone market," IDC concludes.

Go [IDC WW Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker February 2019.](#)