



Severe IT Stock Constraints & Rapid Price Escalation

Procurement teams must act quickly while remaining fully compliant.



The largest number of price increases happened on March 30th with

43,926 out of **182,239** products

- Global semiconductor sales soared over 46% YoY
- AI-enabled smart glasses shipments surged 322% to 8.7m units globally
- Smartphone sales up in Q4 - but beware the coming year

Fortunes in the technology hardware sector have been patchy this month.

Semiconductors excelled with global sales up 46.1% to \$82.5bn in January, while memory saw dramatic price inflation with NAND flash projected to surge 85–90% QoQ in Q1. AI infrastructure investments spawned more network equipment revenue and also stimulated emerging categories such as smart glasses, which saw shipments up 322% to 8.7m units globally last year.

The biggest story at the moment is Iran, with the tussle over the Strait of Hormuz sending oil prices to notable highs. Channel reactions were pessimistic, with Omdia analysts pointing to potential channel bankruptcies if the disruption keeps up. Expect disrupted supply chains and distributor profits, they added. The Bank of England, which had previously estimated a fall in inflation from 3% to 2% in April, now believes it will be between 3% and 3.5% in the next couple of quarters due to high energy prices.

This monthly IT Market Alert from KnowledgeBus provides procurement and IT professionals with timely market intelligence, pricing trends, and supply chain insights across the global IT market.

Our goal is to equip organisations with the insight and data needed to make informed IT procurement decisions - helping teams deliver value, transparency, and stronger governance across their technology purchasing.

Drawing on live market data, real-time pricing analysis, and benchmarking insights from the KnowledgeBus platform, this report supports informed procurement decisions across organisations in both the public and private sectors. It helps teams identify hidden inefficiencies in the IT supply chain, benchmark pricing, secure value for money, and maintain transparency in a rapidly evolving technology market.

The current IT supply chain environment is experiencing unprecedented volatility. Component shortages, surging demand for AI infrastructure, and memory supply constraints are driving rapid price increases and stock allocation pressures across the market.

For organisations planning IT purchases, delayed decision-making can significantly impact budgets and project timelines. Prices submitted during traditional procurement or tender processes may already be outdated by the time awards are completed.

Maintaining both speed and informed procurement decision-making has never been more critical.

This report highlights the market forces shaping IT procurement decisions for organisations in 2026.

Exchange rate

EUR/USD opened March at 1.1698 and closed at 1.1605, a decline of 0.8%. The pair hit its monthly high of 1.1698 on March 2 before falling to a low of 1.1476 on March 13. The euro recovered modestly in the final weeks but remained below its opening level.

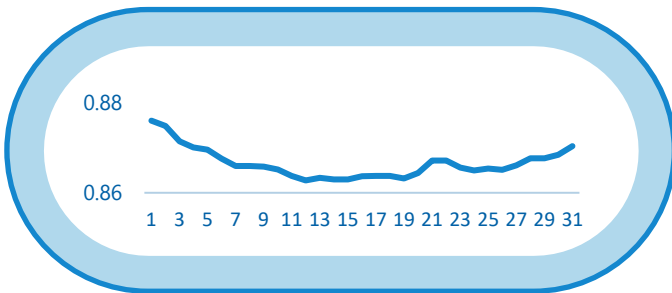
EUR/GBP opened the month at 0.8739 and closed at 0.8711, representing a 0.3% depreciation for the euro. The pair also peaked on March 2 at 0.8739 before dropping to its monthly low of 0.8624 on March 12. Sterling maintained its advantage through month-end.

Central bank policy divergence shaped currency movements throughout March. The Federal Reserve held the federal funds rate at 3.5%-3.75% on March 18. The Bank of England maintained the Bank Rate at 3.75% the same day. The ECB kept its main refinancing rates unchanged on March 19, with the deposit rate at 2.0%. The 175 basis point gap between ECB and Fed policy rates weighed on the euro against the dollar.

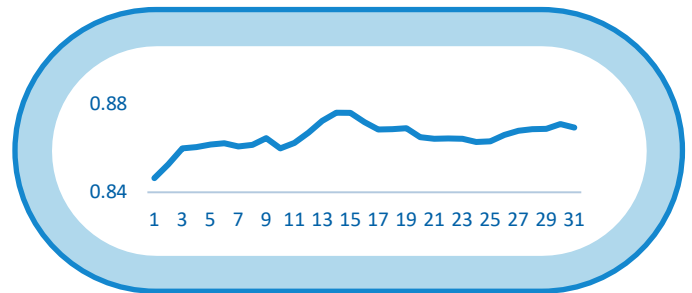
Inflation data reinforced the policy divide. Euro area flash inflation for March came in at 2.6%, up from the confirmed February reading of 1.9%. UK CPI inflation for January registered 3.0% in March. The higher inflation prints in both the UK and US relative to the eurozone supported the case for tighter monetary conditions outside the currency bloc, pressuring EUR/USD and EUR/GBP during the mid-month selloff.



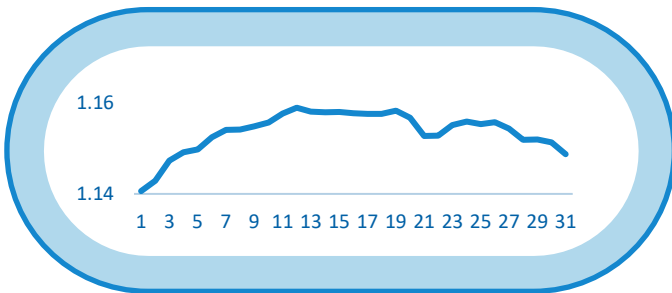
**Euro (EUR)
per 1 British Pound (GBP)**



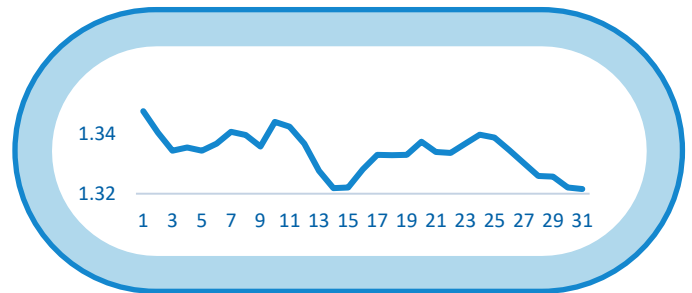
**US Dollar (USD)
per 1 Euro (EUR)**



**British Pound (GBP)
per 1 Euro (EUR)**



**US Dollar (USD)
per 1 British Pound (GBP)**



Phones and Tablets

Global smartphone production reached 337m units in the fourth quarter of 2025, up 2.7% QoQ. Both Apple and Samsung each produced nearly 240m units in 2025, tying for the top position in global smartphone production. Xiaomi ranked third globally for the full year with annual production close to 170m units.

Looking ahead, TrendForce expects global smartphone output to slip at least 10% YoY to around 1.135bn units in 2026. Omdia puts the expected decline at around 7% YoY in 2026, rising to 15% if geopolitical conditions worsen. The gloom wouldn't be evenly distributed, though; devices priced above \$800 will grow by around 4% in 2026, the company adds.

Traditional PCs

India's traditional PC market recorded its strongest performance on record in 2025 per IDC, shipping 15.9m units and growing 10.2% YoY. In the Asia/Pacific region, the traditional PC market grew 11.6% in 2025 to 106.6m units, the company said. However, shipments in the region were projected to decline 13.7% in 2026.

Premium Ultramobiles & Wearables

IDC noted that global extended reality device shipments grew 44.4% YoY, driven primarily by rapid adoption of smart glasses. Global smart glasses shipments surged 139% YoY in the second half of 2025, it added, with AI-enabled glasses accounting for 88% of total shipments in the period. For the full year, global AI glasses shipments reached 8.7m units, marking a 322% increase, per Omdia. Meta dominated the category, holding 85.2% of the global AI glasses market and shipping 7.4m units. The average selling price for AI smart glasses rose to approximately \$360 in the second half of 2025, said Display Daily.

Processors, MEMs, Semiconductors

The global semiconductor industry saw strong momentum into early 2026, with sales up 46.1% YoY to \$82.5bn in January. That's a 3.7% rise from December's \$79.6bn. YoY January sales climbed a more modest 26.1% in Europe.

The sector surpassed \$830bn in 2025 according to Omdia, marking the second consecutive year of more than 20% annual revenue growth, and is projected to reach roughly \$1 trillion in 2026.

The foundry segment demonstrated exceptional strength, with the world's top ten foundries achieving combined revenue of nearly \$46.3bn in the fourth quarter of 2025, up 2.6% QoQ. For the full year 2025, the leading ten foundries recorded approximately \$169.5bn in revenue, a 26.3% YoY increase. Global foundry revenue is projected to grow 24.8% YoY to approximately \$218.8bn in 2026.

Memory

The memory sector experienced sharp price increases and robust revenue growth in late 2025, setting the stage for significant market disruption in 2026. TrendForce noted that the combined revenue of the top five NAND flash suppliers rose 23.8% QoQ to \$21.17bn in the fourth quarter of 2025.

Memory prices in key European markets rose to as much as three to four times their levels in the third quarter of 2025, said CONTEXT Research. Looking ahead, Omdia expected memory and storage prices to rise a minimum of 60% in the first quarter of 2026. TrendForce projected overall NAND flash prices to surge 85–90% QoQ in the first quarter of 2026.

Storage

The external enterprise storage systems market recorded modest growth in the fourth quarter of 2025, expanding 5.5% YoY, per IDC. Dell maintained its leadership position with 23.7% revenue share, while Huawei secured second place with 12.6%, and NetApp finished third with 8.1%. Revenue associated with all-flash arrays demonstrated stronger momentum, growing 18.1% YoY, whilst hybrid flash arrays declined 6.7%. Hard disk drive arrays presented positive growth of 3.1%.

Enterprise SSDs did especially well in Q4, according to TrendForce, with the top five vendors' combined revenue surging 51.7% QoQ to exceed US\$9.9bn. Samsung retained its leading position, reporting nearly \$3.66bn in revenue, up 49.7% QoQ. SK Group's total revenue rose more than 75% QoQ to \$3.26bn, whilst Micron ranked third with revenue exceeding \$1.4bn, representing 41.4% quarterly growth.

Displays

Fortunes were a little more mixed in the display sector in Q4, as Omdia saw global television shipments remained flat YoY at 61.5m units. Mature markets were resilient, though, with North America posting 4.7% YoY growth and Western Europe expanding 3.2%. In contrast, China experienced a sharp contraction, with shipments falling 25.3% YoY. Despite this domestic decline, Chinese manufacturers TCL and Hisense increased their combined shipments by 2.2% YoY, supported by stronger momentum outside China.

Manufacturing capacity continued its shift toward larger substrates, with generation 8.6 capacity projected to account for approximately 26% of global LCD production in 2026. Meanwhile, capacity from fifth-generation and earlier fabrication facilities was expected to fall to about 4.7% of the global LCD market in 2026. Display panel makers' fabrication utilization rate stood at 81% in the fourth quarter of 2025 and was forecast to reach 82% in the first quarter of 2026.



Network Products

Network products sector saw robust growth across multiple segments in 2025, driven primarily by AI infrastructure investments. The four largest US cloud service providers (Amazon, Google, Meta, and Microsoft) increased data centre capital expenditure by 76% in 2025, said Dell'Oro.

Worldwide data centre capital expenditures rose 57% during the year as AI deployments, complemented by general infrastructure investments, accelerated. Full-year 2026 data centre capex was forecast to surpass \$1 trillion.

The AI infrastructure boom created supply constraints for campus switch vendors, which like most of the rest of the industry found some memory components hard to come by. The AI build-out caused a shortage in DDR4 memory, required in most modern WLAN access points. In the Ethernet switch market for AI back-end networks, Celestica and Nvidia led with a combined 50% share in 2025. Ethernet switch sales in AI back-end networks more than tripled in the fourth quarter of 2025.

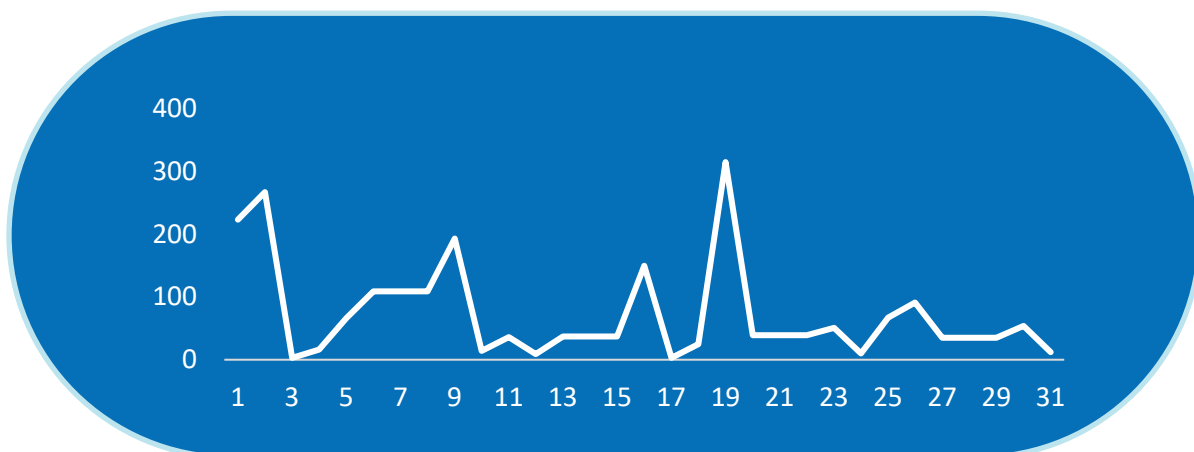
Price increases ranged from a low of 4,696 on March 1 to a peak of 43,926 items on March 30, with an average of 19,861 daily price increases. This represented a notable decrease of 11.2% compared to the previous month. Notable spikes occurred during the month, particularly on March 30.

Price reductions were equally dynamic, fluctuating between 5,354 items on March 30 and a peak of 44,231 items on March 9, averaging 19,291 daily decreases.

Stock replenishment ranged from just 1,730 units on March 17 to a massive 6,381 units on March 9, averaging 3,204 daily additions.

Stock reductions ranged from their low of 7,809 units on March 4 to the peak of 12,924 units on March 19, with an average daily decrease of 10,361 units.

New Products



Monthly stats

