

SA's first smartphone factory goes on auction

The Mara smartphone factory, which was launched in 2019, is empty and on auction, according to a [Business Insider South Africa](#) report. Keith Green, Park Village Auctions' Durban auctioneer, told the publication that Standard Bank and the Industrial Development Corporation ordered the sale of the factory.



The Mara smartphone factory

Auction documents reveal that the factory and all its contents are being sold and that two financial institutions have taken possession of it.

The auction includes the plant, manufacturing, equipment, components for smartphones, and already completed phones that are kept in storage.

"We've had one call out of India, and we're waiting for them to come through, and we've had probably about three or four other guys that have already done some viewing in that industry, that are keen on it," Green told *Business Insider South Africa*.



Mara Phones begins SA retail rollout with Soweto store opening

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"It is unclear what led to the sale of the factory and whether this was due to the brand's inability to gain traction in the South African market," a *Mybroadband* report pointed out.

President Cyril Ramaphosa on the Mara Phones Factory

President Cyril Ramaphosa referred to the launch of the factory in 2019 as a 'great moment in South Africa's drive to be a producer of advanced goods'.

At the time he said: "The CEO of Mara is clear, articulate, visionary, and knows exactly what his company wants to achieve. When we met I immediately knew I was talking to someone who is serious about investing.

"In early 2018, we announced our intention to mobilise over R1.2tn in new investment over a five-year period.

"In our inaugural conference in October last year, companies made 31 investment announcements with a total value of R300bn to be invested in South Africa.

"One such announcement is the one that we celebrate today, the launch of the Mara Smart Phone facility."

Mara reportedly established the factory using half of R1.5bn in funding from Standard Bank and the Industrial Development Corporation.

Mara at the time claimed the facility could assemble 1.2 million smartphones for the domestic and regional market and was already employed 200 workers at its opening.

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