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Kaspersky strengthens partnership with PH gov't

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As the Philippine government tries to make Internet a safer place for every Filipino, it only makes sense for a multinational cybersecurity and anti-virus provider like Kaspersky Lab to see an opportunity for a stronger partnership and, of course, an expansion.

Stephan Neumeier, managing director of Kaspersky Lab in Asia Pacific, said in an interview that the company's plan to expand in the Philippines is on track.

As a start, the Russian company, which currently operates in the Philippines only through distributors and business partners, will soon hire a 'Territory Manager,' a couple of years or "less" before the company finally sets up an office here.

"I am set to do final interviews with a new Territory Manager for the Philippines," Neumeier, who is now in Manila for some meetings, said in an interview.

"Business wise, we've probably should have put one already. Revenues could support it. It could happen in two years or earlier," he added.

Kaspersky Lab Southeast Asia General Manager Sylvia Ng already explained before that the hiring of people is the company's way to understand better the Philippine market when it comes to its cyber security needs.

"We need local voice... local people who will tell us what they need versus having (Kaspersky) people (from different countries) sent there once in two months. We need to hire people for sales as well as technical," Ng said in an earlier report.

"Philippines is a very potential market. Right now, we are trying hard to penetrate the market. In terms of consumer, we are pretty aggressive," she added.

While the expansion is on-going, Kaspersky has also increased its engagement with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT).

Through the DICT, the Philippine government is now working to build on its digital infrastructure in order to protect the country from growing number of cyber attacks all over the world.

As part of this effort, the government recently created the National CyberSecurity Plan 2022 (NCSP), which was formulated to improve

the country's cybersecurity capabilities.

"We are working closely with DICT. We are supporting them with several issues they are facing. Our global research team have supported DICT in the last months. They asked us for supports regarding certain cyber attacks, thinking it may be from Korea. We are very specialized with North Korea," Neumeier said.

To recall, it was late last year when the DICT disclosed that the government's Internet infrastructure might have been compromised by North Korean hackers ahead of the high-level meetings set to take place as part of the Philippines' hosting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit.

This was amid the fact that the Philippines has ranked 8th on the list of countries that are most vulnerable to attacks by malicious software or malware.

"We are sharing our intelligence report with DICT. We will keep on doing that. Our partnership is very good. They are reaching out to us. We are reaching out to them," he added.

Through the National Cyber Intelligence Platform, the DICT is investing in developing the cybersecurity capabilities of the country.

DICT Assistant Secretary Alan Cabanlong said the system is expected to provide proactive actionable intelligence and alerts to assist organizations implement the right measures to protect their financial assets, brands, and customer reputations.

DICT also currently runs Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC), which is tasked to implement the National Cybersecurity Plan, establish the National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT), and facilitates international cooperation on intelligence regarding cybersecurity matters are transferred to the Department.

Meanwhile, with the consistent growth of money remittances from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and the rising use of digital payment systems in the Philippines, Kaspersky Lab today highlighted the need for Filipinos to be more cybersecurity-aware.

Data from the global cybersecurity company confirms that countries in the Asia Pacific region are now heading towards the path of being cashless societies, with the Philippines lagging behind Singapore and India but still on track towards broad consumer adoption of digital payments and mobile wallets.

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