

# NATIONAL STATISTICS CONFERENCE 2012

*“Enhancing National Statistics to Meet Public and Private Sectors Needs during a Period of Transformation”*

Organized jointly by

**Department of Statistics Malaysia and Bank Negara Malaysia**

Session 2: Promoting Data Sharing and Communication of Statistics

*Enhancing the communication of statistics for better understanding of economic and financial conditions*



HOLDINGS

RAM Economics Research

Yeah, Kim Leng  
Group Chief Economist  
[yeah@ram.com.my](mailto:yeah@ram.com.my)

7<sup>th</sup> November, 2012  
Sasana Kijang, Bank Negara Malaysia

# Presentation outline

1

Key principles of official statistics and effective communication

2

Perception survey of expert user group

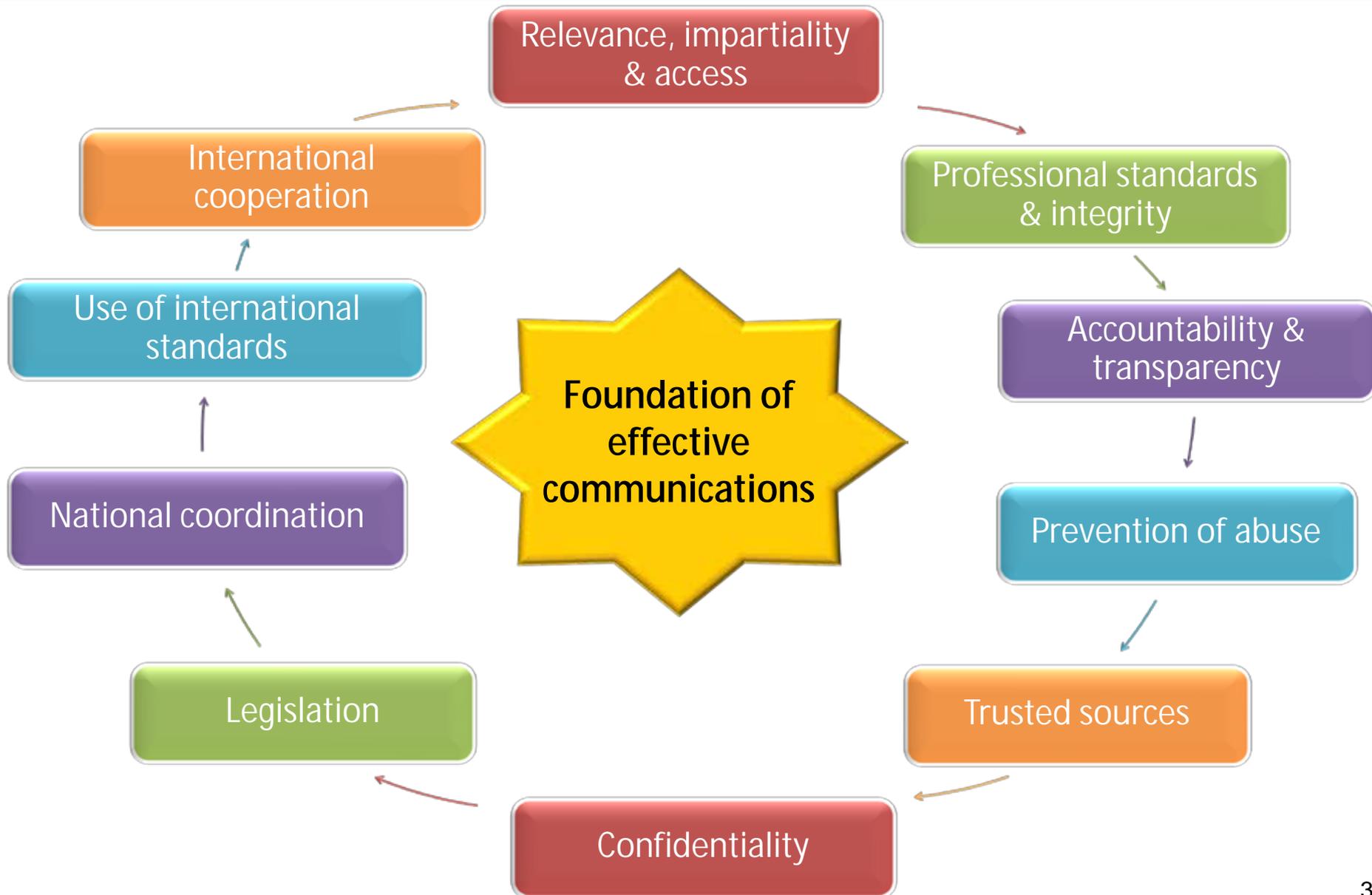
3

Suggestions for enhancing communication effectiveness

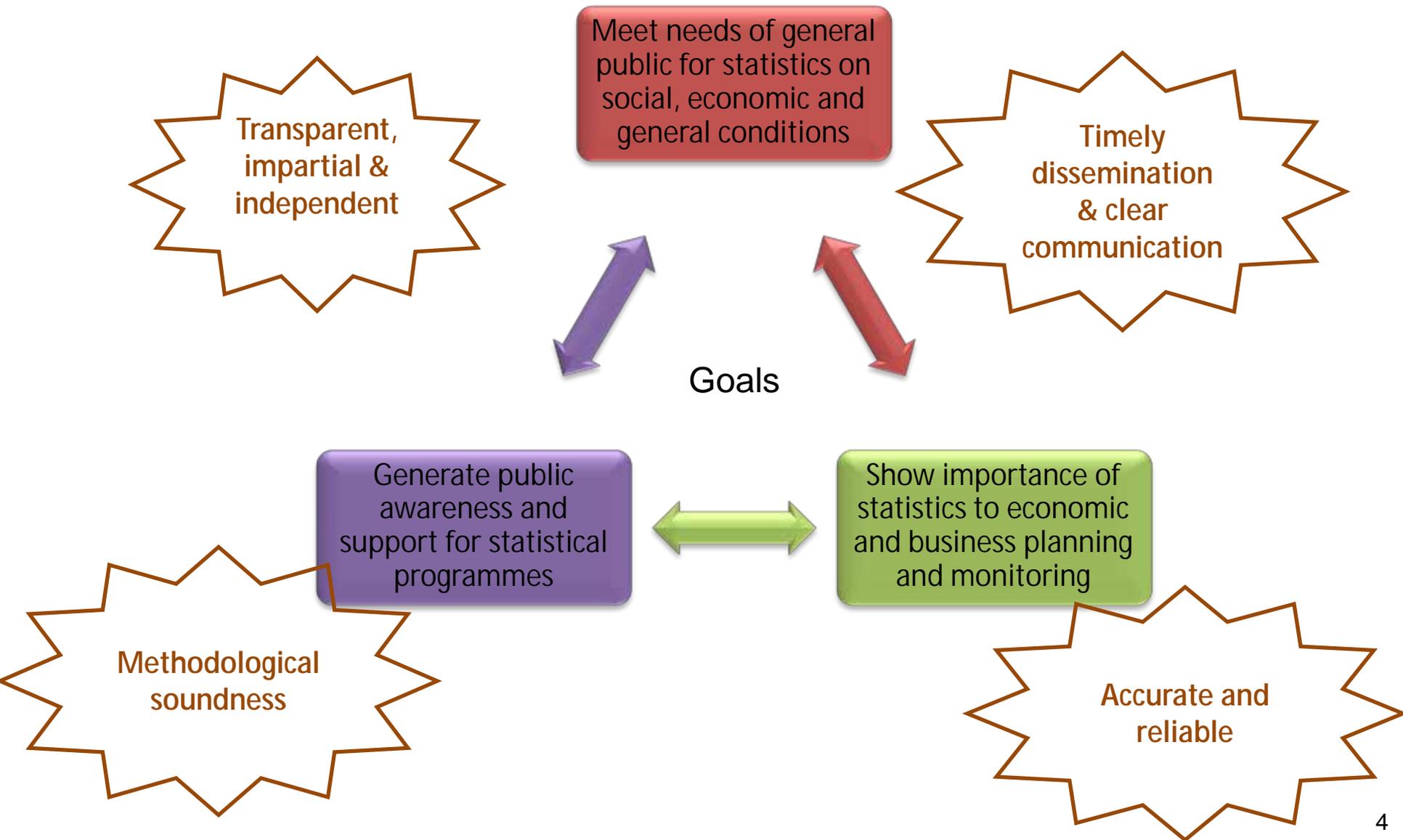
4

Summary and conclusion

# Core principles of official statistical system



# Core principles of effective communication



# Presentation outline

1

Key principles of official statistics and effective communication

2

Perception survey of expert user group

3

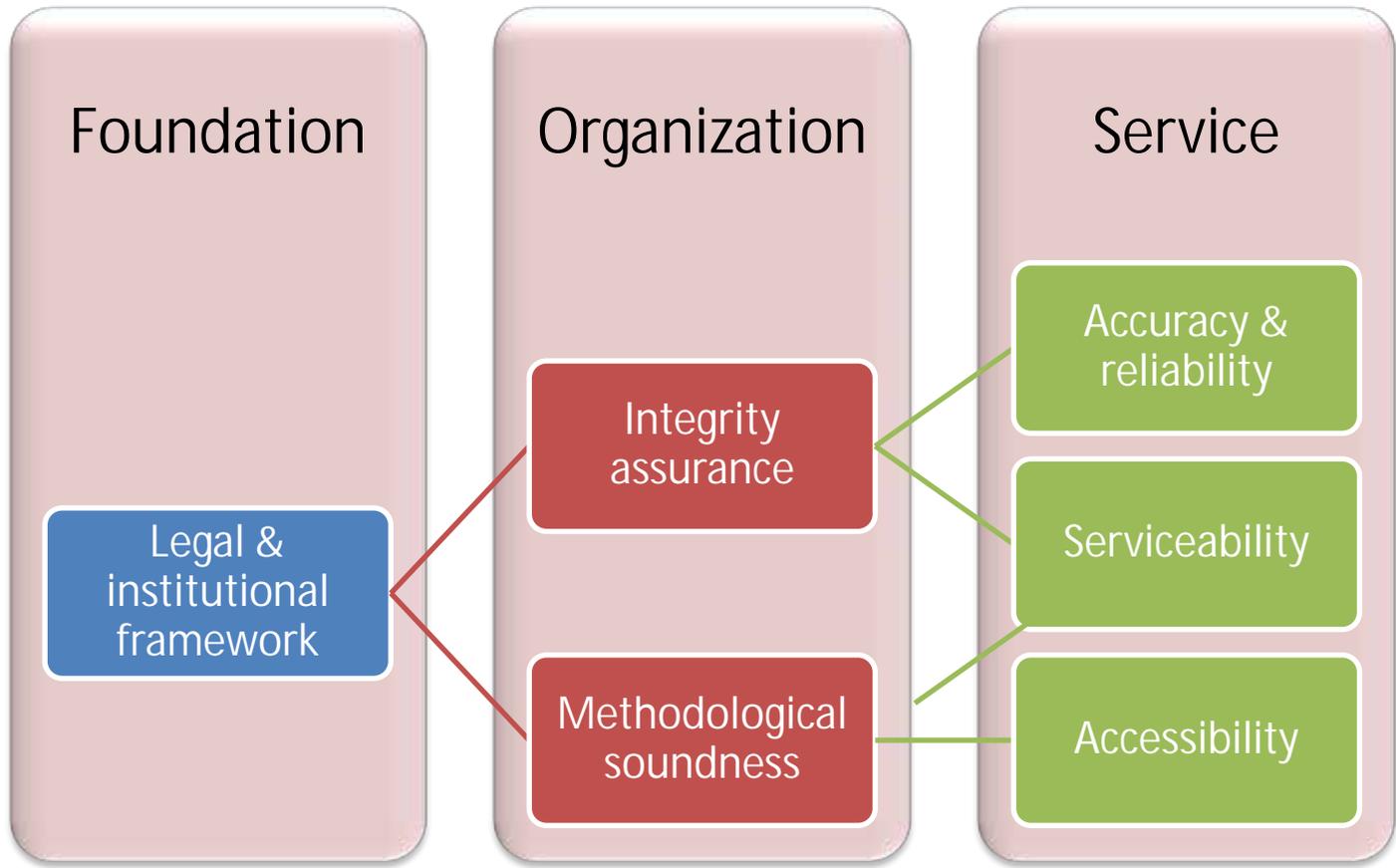
Suggestions for enhancing communication effectiveness

4

Summary and conclusion

# Key areas of expert users' perception survey

- ➔ Purposeful survey of selected expert user group comprising economists, market analysts and researchers; 14 responses received out of 15 canvassed.



# 1. Foundation

- Broad consensus among both local and foreign users in the selected expert user group that the legal and institutional foundation is well established and resources are adequate.

Figure 1.1. There is a well established legal and institutional foundation for collecting and publishing official socio-economic and financial statistics in Malaysia.

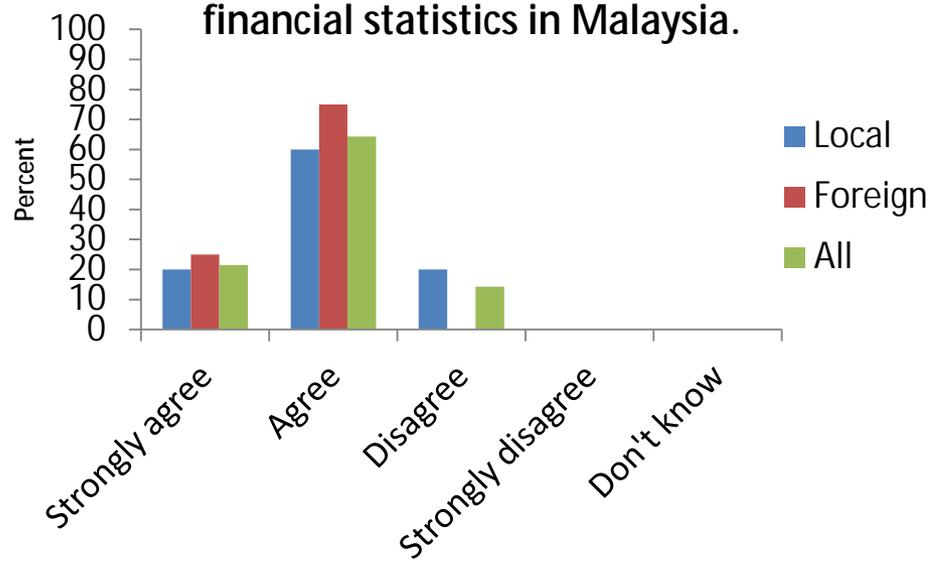
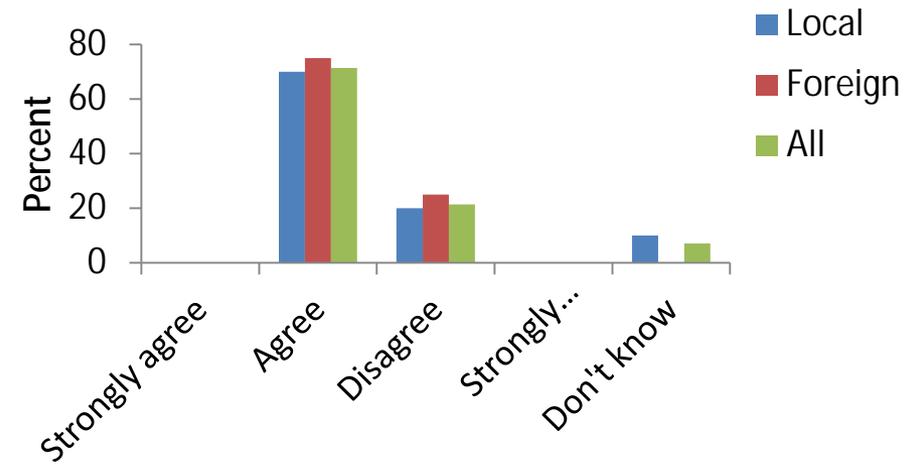


Figure 1.2. There are adequate resources for DOS and other government ministries and agencies to conduct surveys and disseminate social and economic statistics.



# 1. Foundation (cont'd)

- ◆ Respondents expressed stronger relevance of BNM statistics to their work given the importance of monetary and financial conditions to this user group .

Figure 1.3. The social and economic statistics and information collected and published by DOS and other ministries are relevant and useful to my line of work.

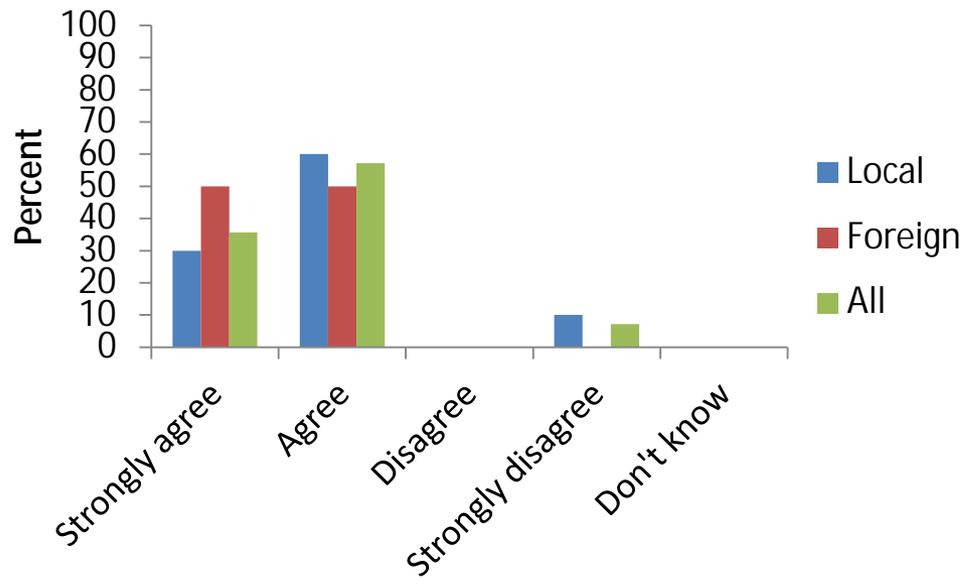
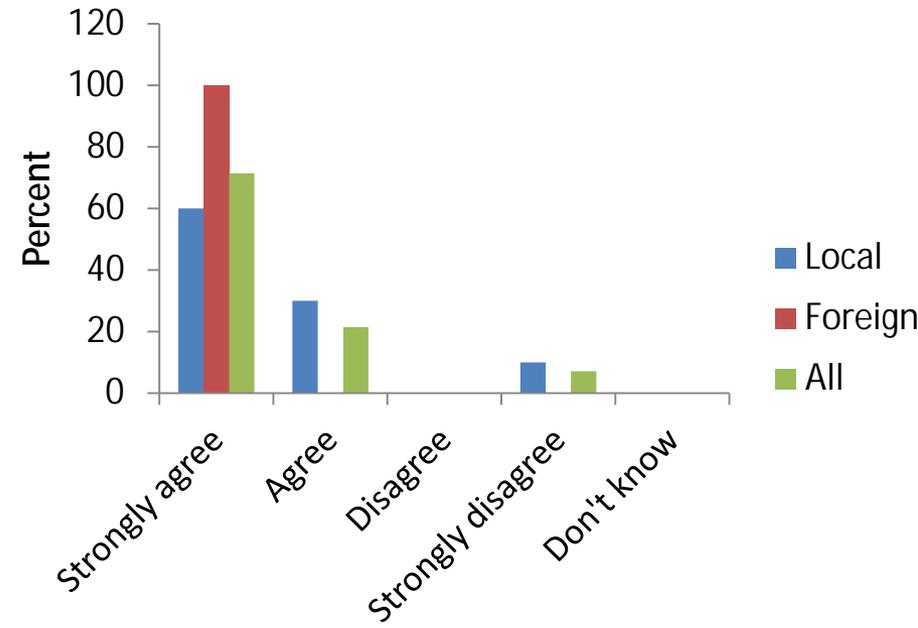


Figure 1.4. The financial statistics collected and published by BNM are relevant and useful to my line of work.



## 2. Integrity assurance

- ◆ The question on data transparency and professionalism elicited more mixed responses especially among the foreign users who are less sanguine on transparency and standard of collection and dissemination.

Figure 2.1. There is a high degree of professionalism in DOS and other government agencies such as BNM in compiling and publishing official statistics.

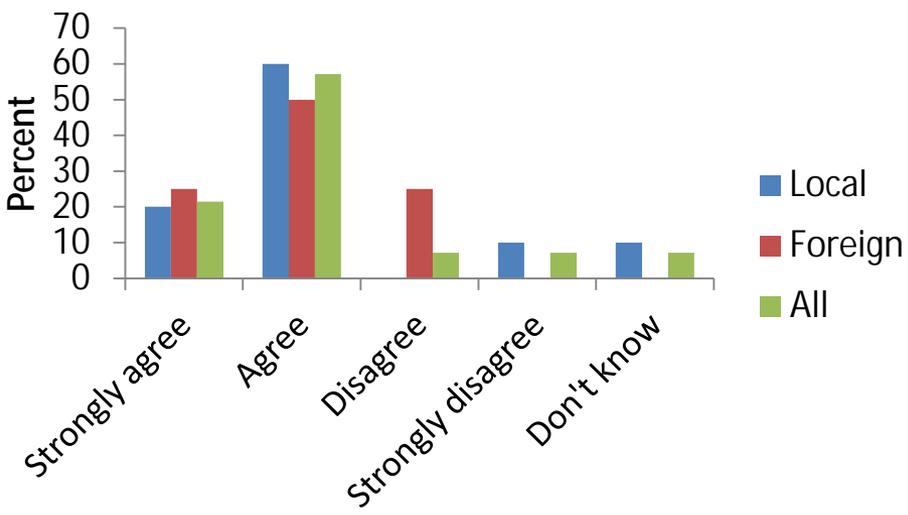
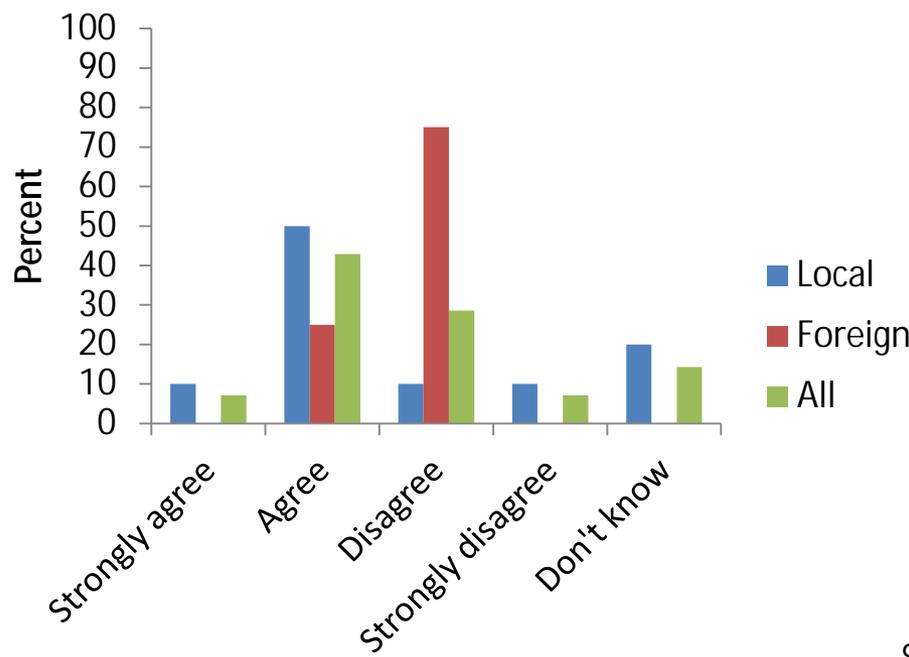


Figure 2.2. The statistical survey methods and procedures employed by Department of Statistics are transparent.



# 3. Methodological soundness and coverage

- More foreign users view the subscription to international standards and best practices by the country's statistical agencies less favorably compared to local users. Both categories however are equally split in the adequacy of data coverage.

Figure 3.1. International standards and best practices are applied in the collection, processing and dissemination of data.

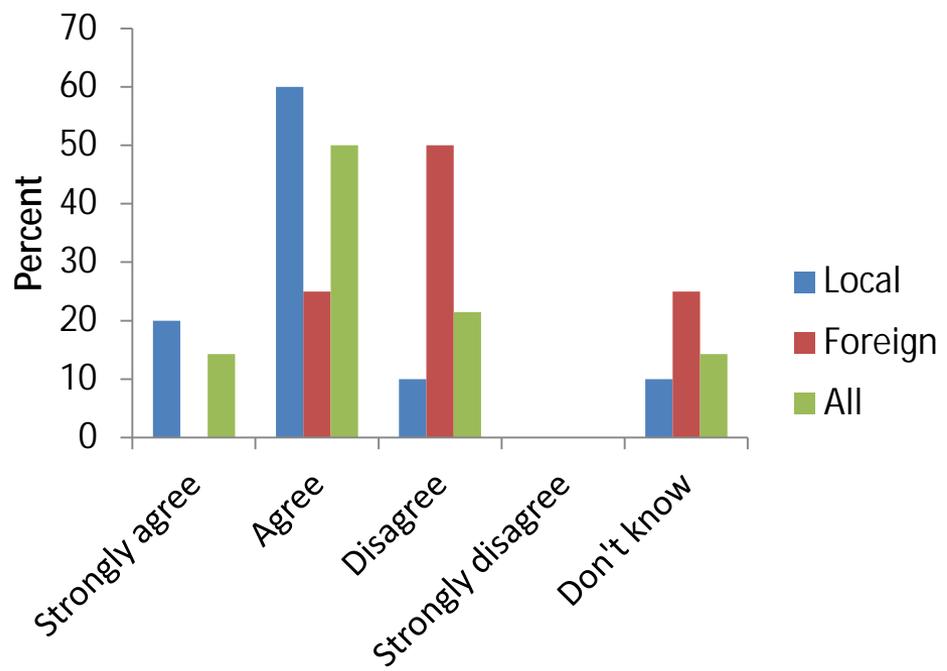
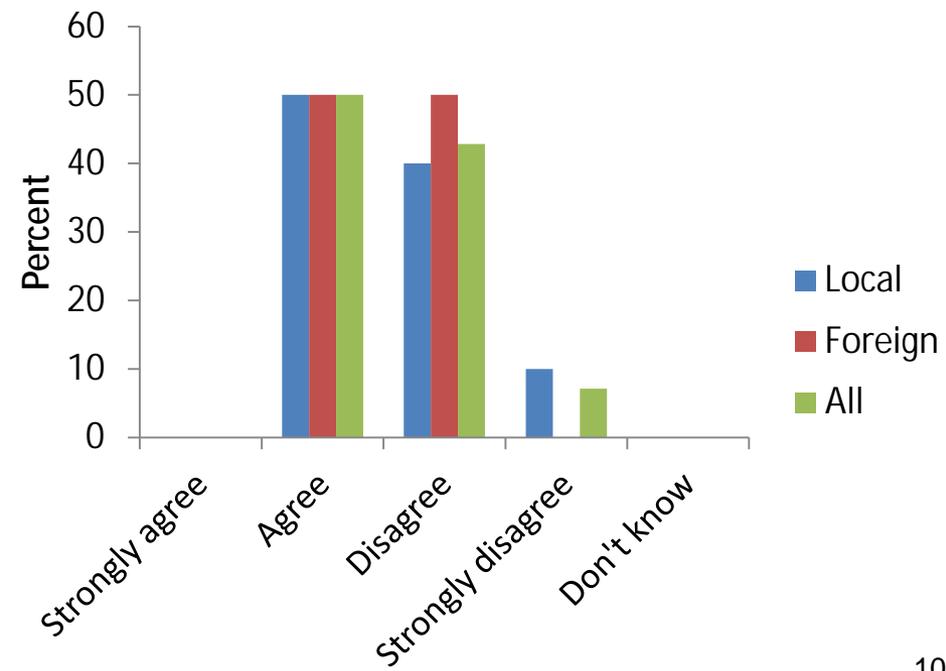


Figure 3.2. The scope of data covered is adequate for each area (eg. demographics, national accounts, trade, labor).



# 4. Accuracy and reliability

➔ Though a majority of users view the data sources to be reliable, a sizeable number of respondents, particularly the foreign users, disagree. The high number of respondents who do not know if statistical techniques are used in surveys point to the need for greater dissemination of information on survey methods.

Figure 4.1. The sources of data collected by the Department of Statistics and other agencies are reliable.

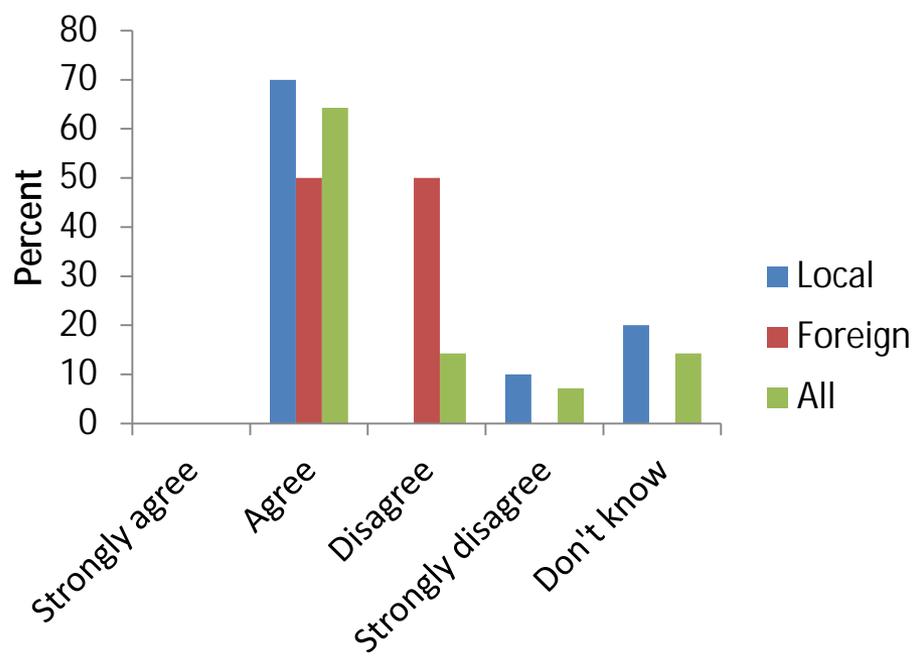
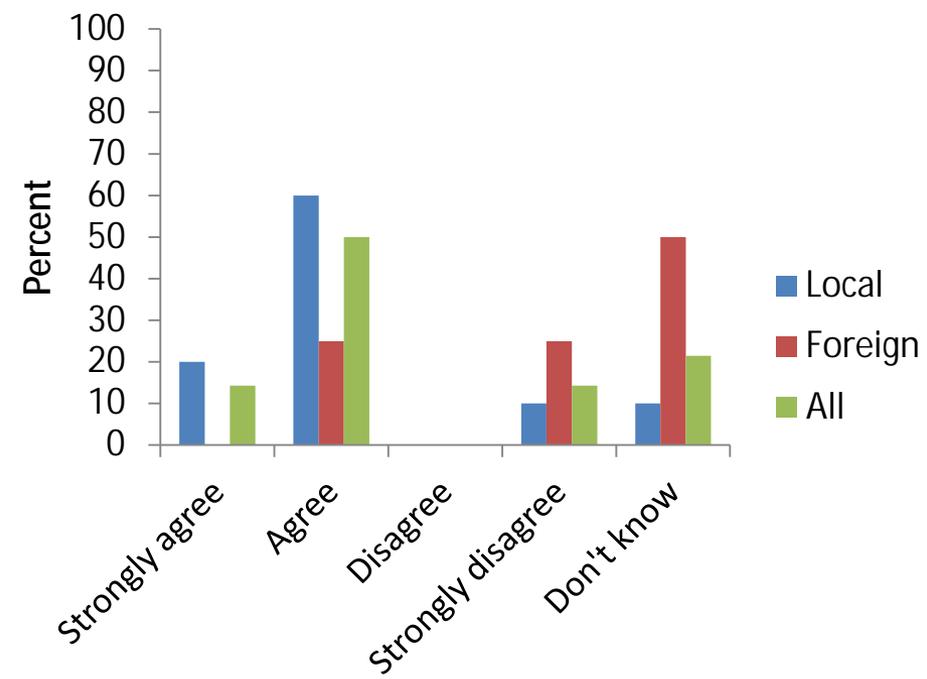


Figure 4.2. Statistical techniques are used in surveys and data collection methods.



# 5. Serviceability

➤ A high proportion of users in the sample do not think that the published statistics are updated regularly and on time although a majority of the respondents (80%) agree that the official statistics in the country are generally coherent and structured. A high number of respondents, especially among the foreign users, expressed the view that policies and practices on revisions of surveys are not clearly explained.

Figure 5.1. The published statistics are updated regularly and in a timely manner.

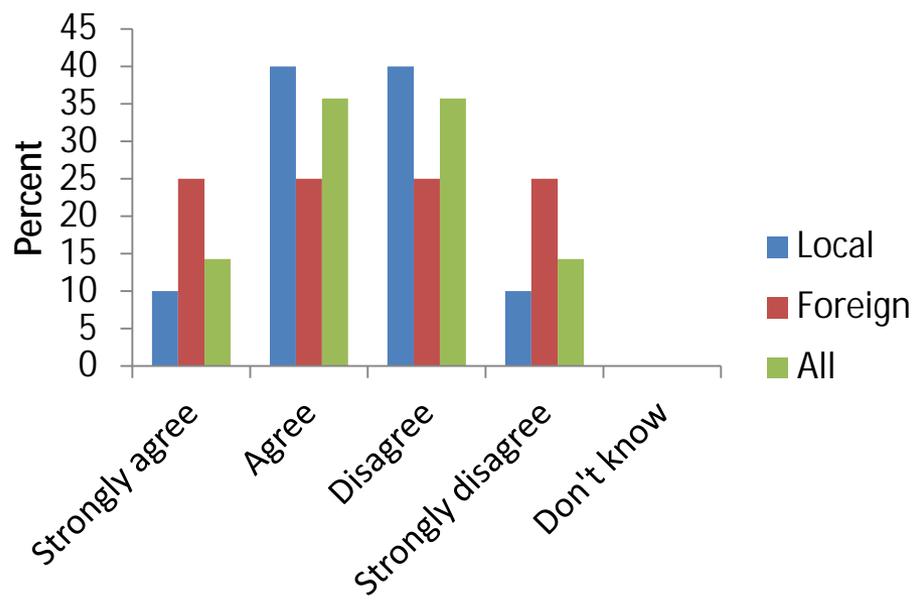
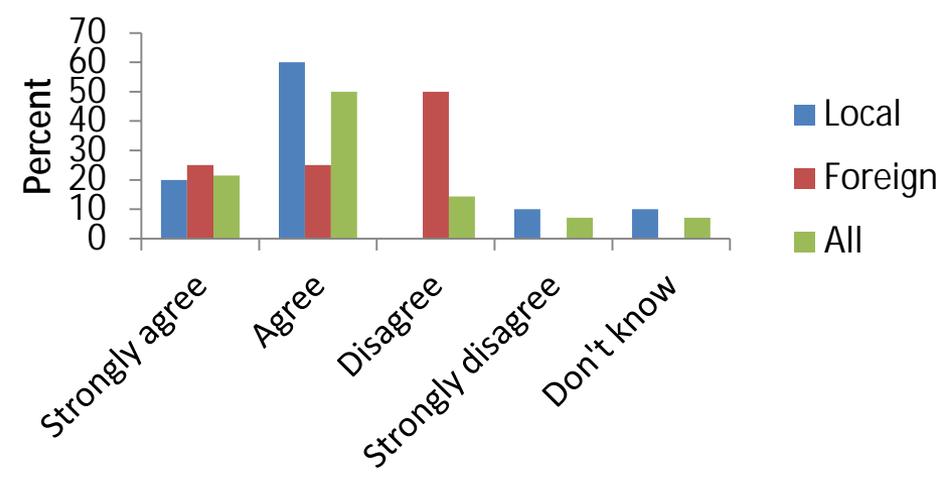


Figure 5.2. The statistics published by the Department of Statistics and other government agencies are generally coherent and structured.



# 6. Accessibility

➔ The perception on data accessibility is split with 64 percent agreeing that there is easy access and the rest disagree. Half of the respondents do not agree that the meta data is readily accessible. Likewise, there is a high number of respondents who perceive inadequate assistance provided by the national statistical agency

Figure 6.1. There is easy access to official statistics in Malaysia.

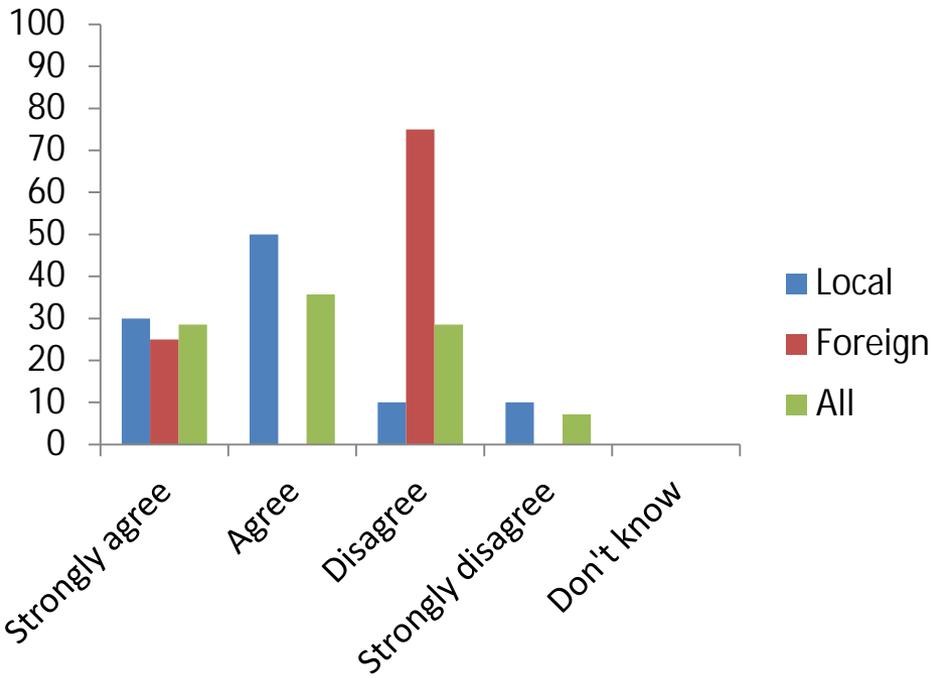
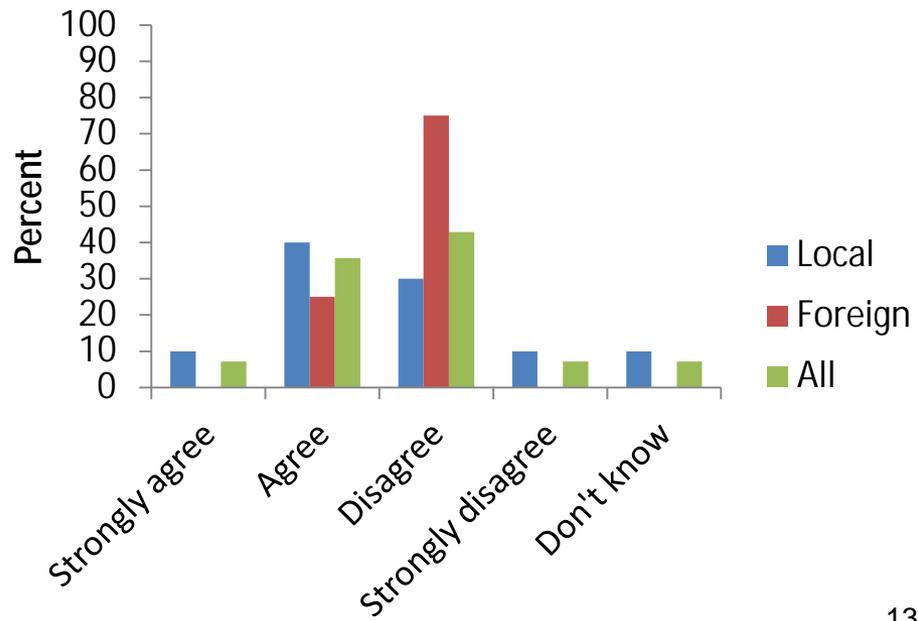


Figure 6.2. Information (metadata) describing the data series are available or accessible by users.



# Presentation outline

1

Key principles of official statistics and effective communication

2

Perception survey of expert user group

3

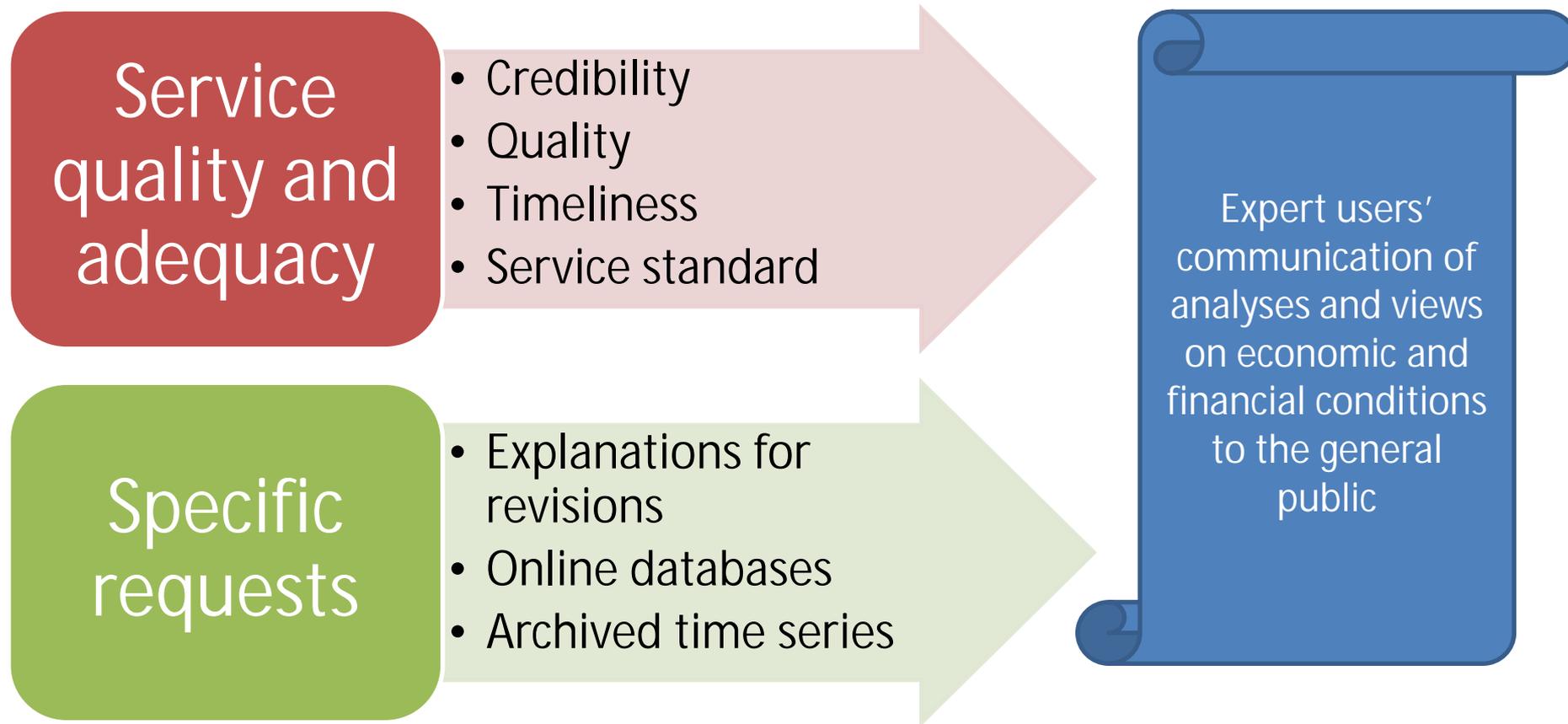
Suggestions for enhancing communication effectiveness

4

Summary and conclusion

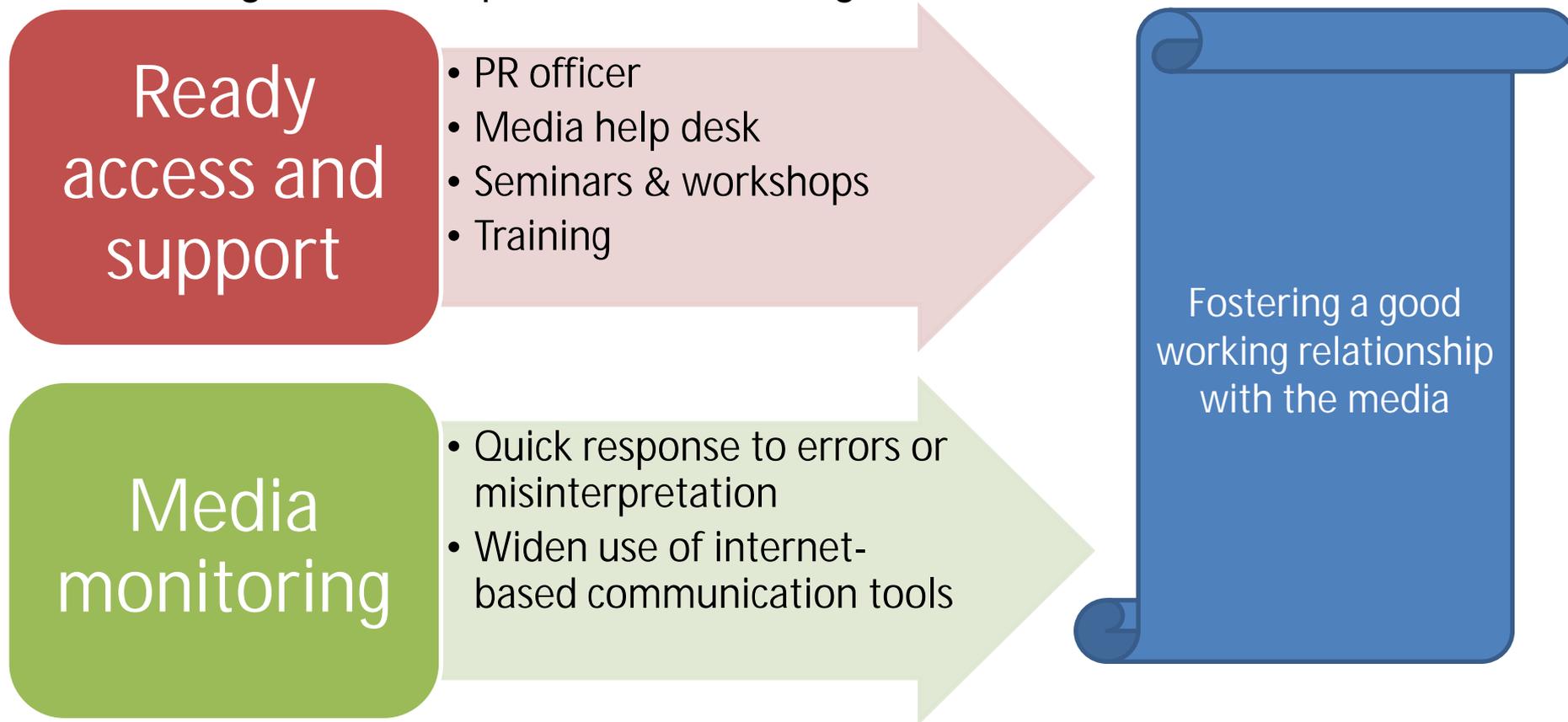
## Thrust 1: Meeting expert users' needs and expectations

- Given its function in monitoring economic performance and providing economic forecasts and market analysis, the main user group (economists, market analysts and researchers) plays an integral role in enhancing society's understanding of economic and financial conditions.



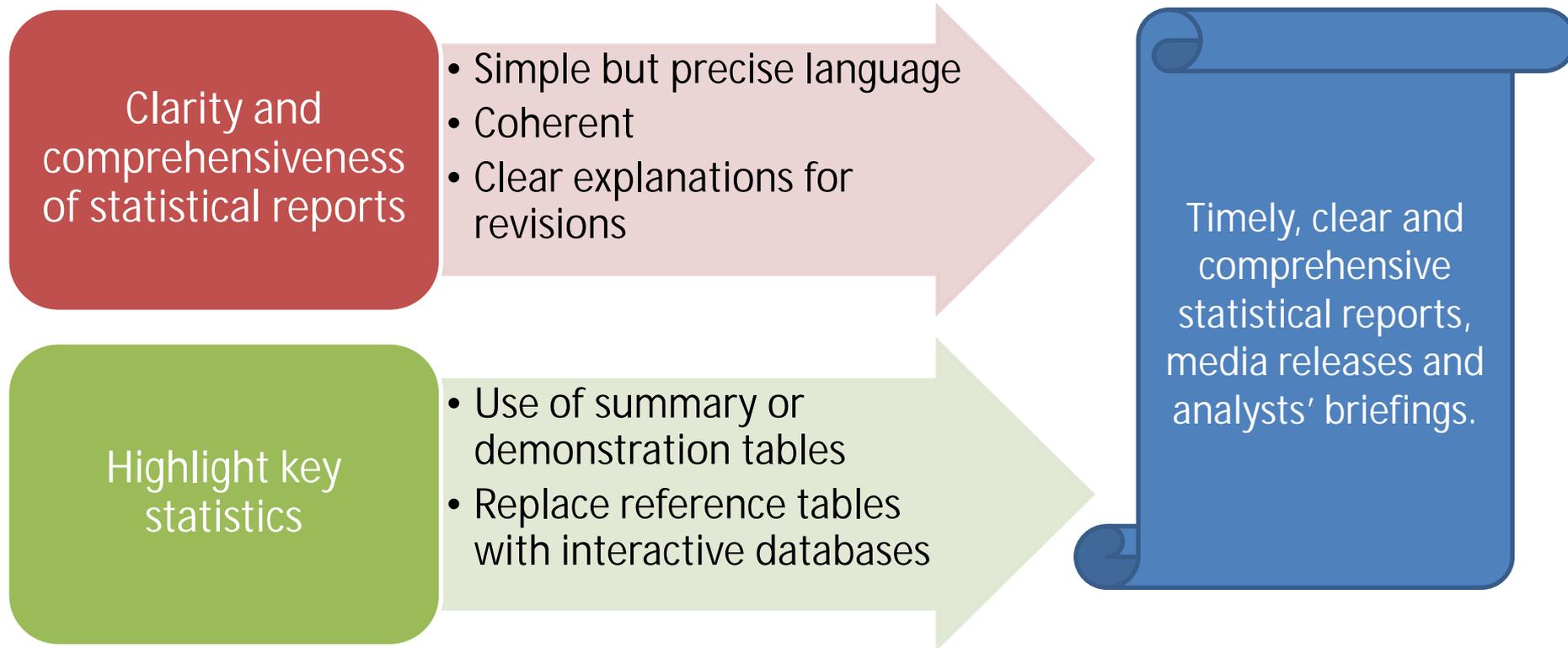
## Thrust 2: Deepening media engagement

- While there is continuing coverage by the mass media on economic and financial statistics, a broader and deeper engagement with the media, specifically the economic or business journalists and reporters, is one of the most effective and indispensable means of informing the general public, stimulating wider discussion and raising the level of public understanding of economic and financial conditions.



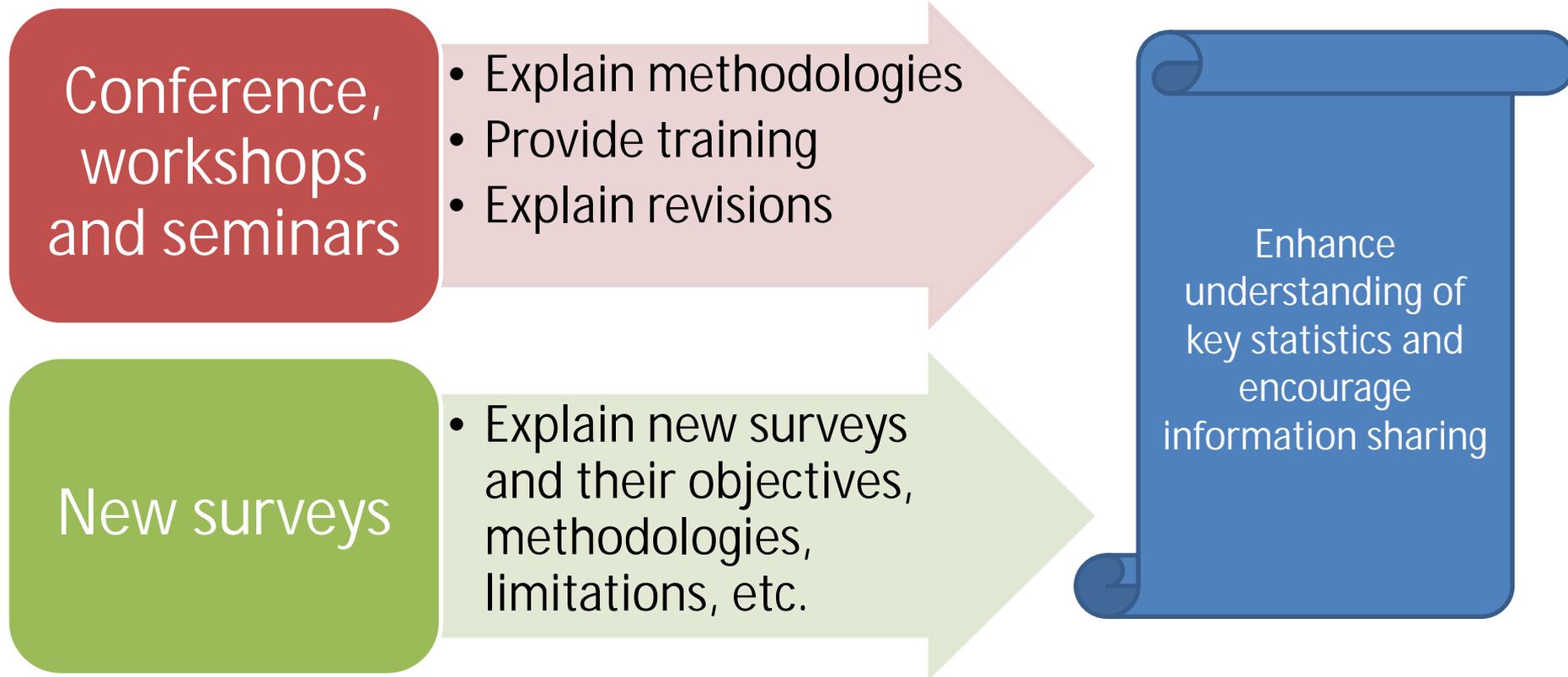
## Thrust 3: Improving clarity and comprehensiveness of statistical reports

- ◆ Ensure clarity in the presentation of statistics and explanations. While statistical agencies tend to adopt the positive approach to reporting, avoiding value judgment especially on government policies, they could nonetheless inject their interpretation if these are helpful for non-expert users to understand what is significant (explanatory comments) and why (analytical comments).



## Thrust 4: Strengthening capabilities and interactions through user group interactions

- With the economy rapidly changing and transforming, statisticians in the public sector are confronted with the challenge of maintaining reconcilability of data with the past while expanding coverage to meet current and future needs. Communicating these changes via seminars, workshops and focus group meetings have become an important part of a well functioning and effective national statistical system. .



# Presentation outline

1

Key principles of official statistics and effective communication

2

Perception survey of expert user group

3

Suggestions for enhancing communication effectiveness

4

Summary and conclusion

# Concluding observations

- Effective dissemination and communication of official statistics play a crucial role in a **country's development process**.
- The results of an expert user group perception survey reveal that there is a significant scope to further **strengthen the quality, timeliness and adequacy** of economics and financial statistics in the country.
- Ensuring **trusted sources of data** and developing the **integrity, credibility and independence** (that is, free from political or market influence) of the producing institutions are the cornerstones of effective communication.
- **Four thrusts** have been identified to focus efforts on enhancing the communication of statistics
  - ∅ meeting the needs and expectations of the **expert users**;
  - ∅ engaging the **media** more extensively to broaden coverage, respond swiftly to erroneous reports or misinterpretation and raise the level of general public's grasp of economic and financial issues;
  - ∅ improve **clarity and comprehensiveness** in media releases and statistical publications, and
  - ∅ strengthening **capabilities and interactions** through user group training workshops, seminars and feedback sessions.



HOLDINGS

REDEFINING EXCELLENCE  
Celebrating *20* Years  
Of Leadership  
1990 - 2010

A grayscale image of chess pieces on a board, with a king piece prominently in the foreground on the right side.

Thank you

RAM Economics Research  
Level 19, The Gardens South Tower  
Mid Valley City, Lingkaran Syed Putra  
59200 Kuala Lumpur  
Tel: (603) 7628 1101 / Fax: (603) 7620 8255  
[www.ram.com.my](http://www.ram.com.my)