

MEDIA COVERAGE

4th RASTA Conference



PIDE MEDIA

September 03 – 04, 2024, Islamabad



1st Day

Web Coverage

Business Recorder

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40320723>

Islamabad Post

<https://islamabadpost.com.pk/pide-hosts-4th-rasta-conference/>

CNN Urdu

<https://cnnurdu.org/11293/>

Associated Press of Pakistan

<https://www.app.com.pk/business/pides-4th-rasta-conference-sparks-innovative-solutions-for-pakistans-bright-future/>

Lead Pakistan

<https://leadpakistan.com.pk/news/pide-hosts-4th-rasta-conference-to-unveil-key-research-findings-in-education-healthcare-exports-investment/>

Independent News Pakistan

<https://www.inp.net.pk/news-detail/pakistan/pide-hosts-4th-rasta-conference-to-unveil-key-research-findings-in-education-healthcare-exports-investment>

The Asian Telegraph

<https://theasiantelegraph.global/?p=18093>

EW News



<https://eastwestnewswire.com/pide-hosts-4th-rasta-conference/>

The Voice of Melang

<https://voiceofmelange.global/?p=16793>

The Pakistan Times

<https://thepakistantimes.com.pk/pide-hosts-4th-rasta-conference-to-unveil-key-research-findings-in-education-healthcare-exports-investment/>

2nd Day

Business Recorder

<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40320891/taxing-absentee-landlords-could-generate-rs7961bn-experts>

Associated Press of Pakistan

<https://www.app.com.pk/business/pides-4th-rasta-conference-experts-discuss-pakistans-food-agriculture-fiscal-management-issues/>

Independent News Pakistan

<https://inp.net.pk/news-detail/pakistan/pide-4th-rasta-concludes-with-critical-insights-on-food-agriculture-fiscal-management>

Bol News

<https://www.bolnews.com/business/2024/09/pide-4th-rasta-concludes-with-critical-insights-on-food-agriculture-fiscal-management/>

Urdu Point



<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/business/pides-4th-rasta-conference-experts-discuss-1859875.html>

The Asian Telegraph

<https://theasiantelegraph.global/?p=18154>

EW News

<https://eastwestnewswire.com/pide-4th-rasta-concludes-with-critical-insights-on-food-agriculture-fiscal-management/>

Voice of Melange

<https://voiceofmelange.global/?p=16852>

The Pakistan Time

<https://thepakistantimes.com.pk/pide-4th-rasta-concludes-with-critical-insights-on-food-agriculture-fiscal-management/>

Head Topics

<https://headtopics.com/pk/8073686932521164878-58451763>

Greet Post

<https://greenpost.com.pk/pphs-2024-marks-a-significant-milestone-in-socio-economic-research-dr-nayab/>



PIDE 4th RASTA concludes with critical insights on food, agriculture, & fiscal management

■ STAFF REPORTER
ISLAMABAD

The RASTA Conference 2024 concluded today with an impactful second day of sessions, focusing on pressing issues in food, agriculture, and fiscal management in Pakistan. Hosted by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), the conference brought together experts and policymakers to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing these critical sectors.

The day began with a session on "Food & Agriculture," which featured significant discussions on the effects of government policies on agricultural production. Khair Muhammad Kakar from UET Khuzdar presented a comprehensive analysis of the impact of government policies on olive production in Pakistan. His research highlighted that while government initiatives have promoted olive cultivation, several challenges persist, such as limited technical knowledge among farmers, inadequate access to quality plant materials, and insuffi-

cient processing facilities. Kakar emphasized the need for consistent and targeted policy interventions to overcome these barriers and enhance olive production, particularly in regions like Balochistan, which show considerable potential.

Saranjam Muhammad Baig from Karolium International University, Gilgit, provided an in-depth examination of the political economy of wheat subsidies and food security in Gilgit-Baltistan. His study revealed that despite the region receiving substantial wheat subsidies since the 1970s, food insecurity remains a significant issue, affecting over 50% of the population. Baig's analysis identified inefficiencies in the subsidy distribution, with wealthier households benefiting disproportionately. He recommended a targeted subsidy approach, improved transparency in distribution, and support for local agriculture to address these inefficiencies and enhance food security in the region.

Iran Ahmad Baig from MNS University of Agriculture, Multan, discussed the complexities



of taxing rental income in agriculture. His presentation shed light on the skewed land distribution in Pakistan, where a small percentage of large landowners hold a significant portion of the land. Baig argued for comprehensive agrarian tax reform to address this disparity and suggested that taxing absentee landlords could be an effective way to generate revenue for public services and infrastructure development.

Following a tea break, the conference continued with the RASTA Showcase-II session, where Dr. Durre Nayab, Director of Research

at PIDE Islamabad, presented the findings from the Pakistan Panel Household Survey (PPHS) 2024 Round. She said that PPHS 2024 marks a significant milestone in socio-economic research, offering comprehensive insights into the dynamic shifts within Pakistan's households over the past decades. Initiated by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) with financial backing from the World Bank in 2001, the survey has evolved through various rounds, with the 2024 iteration expanding its urban representation and covering 14 additional districts. For the first time, the survey includes digital data collection methods, ensuring a broader scope and more detailed data on education, employment, household assets, and new metrics such as financial literacy and care work employment. The PPHS 2024 also introduced new modules, focusing on CNIC/B-form registrations, eating-out expenditures, and subjective welfare, making it one of the most extensive panel surveys ever conducted in Pakistan.

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Sarajam Muhammad Baig from Karakoram International University, Gilgit, provided an in-depth examination of the political economy of wheat subsidies and food security in Gilgit-Baltistan. His study revealed that despite the region receiving substantial wheat subsidies since the 1970s, food insecurity remains a significant issue, affecting over 50% of the population. Baig's analysis identified inefficiencies in the subsidy distribution, with wealthier households benefiting disproportionately. He recommended a targeted subsidy approach, improved transparency in distribution, and support for local agriculture to address these inefficiencies and enhance food security in the region.

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PIDE Hosts 4th RASTA Conference to Unveil Key Research Findings in Education, Healthcare, Exports, & Investment

■ NEWS DESK
 ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) hosted the 4th RASTA Conference, a two-day event that showcased pivotal research findings in critical sectors such as education, health-care, exports, and investment. Attended by policymakers, academics, and industry leaders, the conference underscored the importance of research-driven strategies in shaping Pakistan's future.

The event commenced with a detailed RASTA Progress Report presented by Dr. Fahem Jehangir, Project Director of RASTA. He highlighted that the conference would feature five technical sessions and two showcase sessions, covering topics such as food and agriculture, fiscal management, and more.

These sessions brought together 17 research teams to present their

findings, fostering an extensive knowledge network and promoting high-quality, evidence-based policy research.

Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Chairman of RASTA and Vice-Chancellor of PIDE, emphasized the essential role of research in policy development. He noted that the conference featured presentations of cutting-edge research, including studies on the mental health and well-being of healthcare professionals, the potential of Pakistan's IT industry for software export growth, and the impact of government policies on olive production.

In addition to the technical sessions, the conference included showcase sessions highlighting significant projects, such as improving Pakistan's electricity billing system and findings from the 2024 round of the Pakistan Panel Household Survey (PPHS).



Dr. Haque further elaborated on RASTA's mission, describing it as Pakistan's largest and most comprehensive social sciences research network, dedicated to bridging the gap between research and policy to enhance public policy and guide

higher education sectors. Kazi Atiq Ahmed from the Institute of Business Management, Karachi, opened the session with a presentation on the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan. His study provided an in-depth analysis of the manufacturing of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API), emphasizing the country's heavy reliance on imports. Ahmed highlighted the necessity for strategic investments in local API production, which he argued would not only reduce import dependency but also stimulate growth within the sector.

His research pointed towards a comprehensive industrial policy that could foster domestic capabilities and promote self-sufficiency in pharmaceutical manufacturing. Following this, Mir Muhammad Shah from Sukkur IBA University presented a study focusing on the mental health challenges faced by healthcare professionals in Pakistan. Shah's research underscored the severe impact of resource shortages, such as inadequate staffing and insufficient mental health support systems, which contribute to the high levels of stress and burnout among healthcare workers.

He proposed several policy recommendations, including the implementation of a General Practitioner (GP) system that could alleviate pressure on specialists and a national initiative for enhanced training of healthcare providers to better manage stress and improve overall healthcare delivery. Aamer Raza from the University of Peshawar then provided a critical examination of the 18th Amendment's impact on Pakistan's higher education system. His analysis focused on the governance and funding challenges that have emerged since the devolution of powers to the provinces. Raza argued that the decentralization has led to inconsistencies in educational standards across regions and created significant hurdles in terms of funding allocation. He suggested a re-evaluation of the amendment's implementation, advocating for stronger federal oversight to ensure uniformity and quality in higher education. The session concluded with Rashid Kaker, Member of the Social Sector, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, who provided closing remarks synthesizing the insights from the presentations and emphasizing the need for integrated policy approaches to address the multifaceted challenges in education and healthcare.

PIDE hosts 4th RASTA conference to unveil key research findings

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) hosted the 4th RASTA Conference, a two-day event that showcased pivotal research findings in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, exports, and investment. Attended by policymakers, academics, and industry leaders, the conference underscored the importance of research-driven strategies in shaping Pakistan's future. The event commenced with a detailed RASTA Progress Report presented by Dr. Faheem Jehangir, Project Director of RASTA. He highlighted that the conference would feature five technical sessions and two showcase sessions, covering topics such as food and agriculture, fiscal management, and more. These sessions brought together 17 research teams to present their findings, fostering an extensive knowledge network and promoting high-quality, evidence-based policy research. Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Chairman of RASTA and Vice-Chancellor of PIDE, emphasized the essential role of research in policy development. He noted that the conference featured presentations of cutting-edge research, including studies on the mental health and well-being of healthcare professionals, the potential of Pakistan's IT industry for software export growth, and the impact of government policies on olive production. In addition to the technical sessions, the conference included showcase sessions highlighting significant projects, such as improvements in Pakistan's electricity billing system and findings from the 2024 round of the Pakistan Panel Household Survey (PPHS). Dr. Haque further elaborated on RASTA's mission, describing it as Pakistan's largest and most comprehensive social sciences research network, dedicated to bridging the gap between research and policy to enhance public policy and guide government decision-making. The first session of the conference, titled "Education and Healthcare," featured an array of critical insights into the challenges and opportunities within Pakistan's pharmaceutical, mental health, and higher education sectors.



Kazi Afaq Ahmed from the Institute of Business Management, Karachi, opened the session with a presentation on the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan. His study provided an in-depth analysis of the manufacturing of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API), emphasizing the country's heavy reliance on imports. Ahmed highlighted the necessity for strategic investments in local API production, which he argued would not only reduce import dependency but also stimulate growth within the sector. His research pointed towards a comprehensive industrial policy that could foster domestic capabilities and promote self-sufficiency in pharmaceutical manufacturing. Following this, Mir Muhammad Shah from Sukkur IBA University presented a study focusing on the mental health challenges faced by healthcare professionals in Pakistan. Shah's research underscored the severe impact of resource shortages, such as inadequate

staffing and insufficient mental health support systems, which contribute to the high levels of stress and burnout among healthcare workers. He proposed several policy recommendations, including the implementation of a General Practitioner (GP) system that could alleviate pressure on specialists and a national initiative for enhanced training of healthcare providers to better manage stress and improve overall healthcare delivery. Aamer Raza from the University of Peshawar then provided a critical examination of the 18th Amendment's impact on Pakistan's higher education system. His analysis focused on the governance and funding challenges that have emerged since the devolution of powers to the provinces. Raza argued that the decentralization has led to inconsistencies in educational standards across regions and created significant hurdles in terms of funding allocation. He suggested a re-evaluation of the amendment's implementation, advocating for stronger federal oversight to ensure uniformity and

quality in higher education. The session concluded with Rafiqullah Kakar, Member of the Social Sector, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, who provided closing remarks synthesizing the insights from the presentations and emphasizing the need for integrated policy approaches to address the multifaceted challenges in education and healthcare. The second session, focusing on "Pakistan's Export Potential," was a deep dive into the opportunities and challenges within the halal beef and IT industries. Shauzad Kouser from COMSATS University, Islamabad, began the session by analyzing the global demand for halal beef and Pakistan's potential to become a leading exporter. He identified key challenges, including adherence to international standards, logistical bottlenecks, and limited market access, which currently hinder Pakistan's competitiveness in the global market. Kouser proposed a multi-faceted strategy to overcome these barriers, including improving standards compliance, enhancing supply chain infrastructure, and exploring new markets through targeted trade agreements. Following this, Naveed Arshad from LUMS, Lahore, presented a compelling case for the IT sector as a significant driver of economic growth. Arshad highlighted the untapped potential in software exports, emphasizing the need for strategic investments in education and infrastructure. He advocated for policy reforms aimed at creating a more conducive environment for IT businesses, which could significantly boost Pakistan's standing in the global IT market. His proposals included upskilling the workforce, improving internet infrastructure, and offering tax incentives to attract foreign tech firms to invest in Pakistan. The session was moderated by Zafar ul Hasan, Joint Chief Economist, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, who provided additional context and facilitated discussions on how Pakistan could effectively position itself in these emerging global markets. In the RASTA Showcase-I session, Afa Malik, Senior Research Economist at PIDE, presented her research on improving efficiency in Pakistan's electricity billing system. Malik's study explored innovative approaches to reduce energy wastage and enhance the financial health of the energy sector. She discussed the importance of technology adoption in billing processes and proposed policy interventions that could streamline operations.

PIDE Hosts 4th RASTA Conference to Unveil Key Research Findings in Education, Healthcare, Exports, & Investment

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) hosted the 4th RASTA Conference, a two-day event that showcased pivotal research findings in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, exports, and investment. Attended by policymakers, academics, and industry leaders, the conference underscored the importance of research-driven strategies in shaping Pakistan's future. The event commenced with a detailed RASTA Progress Report presented by Dr. Faheem Jehangir, Project Director of RASTA. He highlighted that the conference would feature five technical sessions and two showcase sessions, covering topics such as food and agriculture, fiscal management, and more. These sessions brought together 17 research teams to present their findings, fostering an extensive knowledge network and promoting high-quality, evidence-based policy research.

Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Chairman of RASTA and Vice-Chancellor of PIDE, emphasized the essential role of research in policy development. He noted that the conference featured presentations of cutting-edge research, including studies on the mental health and well-being of healthcare profes-

sionals, the potential of Pakistan's IT industry for software export growth, and the impact of government policies on olive production. In addition to the technical sessions, the conference included showcase sessions highlighting significant projects, such as improvements in Pakistan's electricity billing system and findings from the 2024 round of the Pakistan Panel Household Survey (PPHS).

The first session of the conference, titled "Education and Healthcare," featured an array of critical insights into the challenges and opportunities within Pakistan's pharmaceutical, mental health, and higher education sectors. Kazi Afiq Ahmed from the Institute of Business Management, Karachi, opened the session with a presentation on the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan.

Following this, Mir Muhammad Shah from Sukkur IBA University presented a study focusing on the mental health challenges faced by healthcare professionals in Pakistan. Shah's research underscored the severe impact of resource shortages, such as inadequate staffing and insufficient mental health support systems, which contribute to the high levels of stress and burnout among healthcare workers. He proposed several policy



recommendations, including the implementation of a General Practitioner (GP) system that could alleviate pressure on specialists and a national initiative for enhanced training of healthcare providers to better manage stress and improve overall healthcare delivery. Aamer Raza from the University of Peshawar then provided a critical examination of the 18th Amendment's impact on Pakistan's higher education system.

The second session, focusing on "Pakistan's Export Potential," was a

deep dive into the opportunities and challenges within the halal beef and IT industries. Shahzad Kouser from COMSATS University, Islamabad, began the session by analyzing the global demand for halal beef and Pakistan's potential to become a leading exporter. He identified key challenges, including adherence to international standards, logistical bottlenecks, and limited market access, which currently hinder Pakistan's competitiveness in the global market. Kouser proposed a multi-faceted strategy to

overcome these barriers, including improving standards compliance, enhancing supply chain infrastructure, and exploring new markets through targeted trade agreements. Following this, Naveed Arshad from LUMS, Lahore, presented a compelling case for the IT sector as a significant driver of economic growth. The session was moderated by Zafar ul Hasan, Joint Chief Economist, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, who provided additional context and facilitated discussions on how Pakistan could effectively position itself in these emerging global markets.

In the RASTA Showcase-I session, Afia Malik, Senior Research Economist at PIDE, presented her research on improving efficiency in Pakistan's electricity billing system. Malik's study explored innovative approaches to reduce energy wastage and enhance the financial health of the energy sector.

The final session of the conference, centered on "Investment Strategies," featured critical analyses of how Pakistan can attract and retain investment, particularly in light of recent economic challenges. Syed Twangar Hussain Kazmi from Torque Communities, Islamabad, provided a roadmap for leveraging Foreign Direct Invest-

ment (FDI) to spur local innovation and economic growth. Drawing on examples from East Asian economies, Kazmi highlighted the importance of creating a favorable investment climate through policy stability, infrastructure development, and innovative financing mechanisms. Abdul Wahid from NUAMI, Islamabad, discussed the alarming trend of decapitalization in the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

Tomorrow, on the second day of the conference, the following research will be presented: 'Impact of Government Policies on the Production of Olive in Pakistan,' 'The Political Economy of Wheat Subsidy and Food Security in Gilgit-Baltistan,' 'Taxing the Rental Income in Agriculture: Analysis of Alternate Options,' 'Pakistan Panel Household Survey (PPHS) 2024 Round' by Durre Nayab, Director of Research, 'The Governance Structure and Flaws Within: A Case Study of the Ministry of Science and Technology and Its Public Sector Entities,' 'Governing Public Sector Projects in Gilgit-Baltistan: A Multi-Stakeholder Analysis,' 'Documentation Simplification via Tax E-Filing: Examining Barriers to Adoption and Continuation Intention of Using E-Filing by Taxpayers in Pakistan,' and 'Analysis of Tax Expenditures in Pakistan.'

NATIONAL

VC PIDE termed RASTA Pakistan's largest social sciences research network

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Chairman of RASTA and Vice-Chancellor of PIDE, emphasized the essential role of research in policy development. He noted that the conference featured presentations of cutting-edge research, including studies on the mental health and well-being of healthcare professionals, the potential of Pakistan's IT industry for software export growth, and the impact of government policies on olive production. In addition to the technical sessions, the conference included showcase sessions highlighting significant projects, such as improvements in Pakistan's electricity billing system and findings from the 2024 round of the Pakistan Panel Household Survey (PPHS). Dr. Haque further elaborated on RASTA's mission, describing it as Pakistan's largest and most comprehensive social sciences research network, dedicated to bridging the gap between research and policy to en-

hance public policy and guide government decision-making.

The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) hosted the 4th RASTA Conference, a two-day event that showcased pivotal research findings in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, exports, and investment. Attended by policymakers, academics, and industry leaders, the conference underscored the importance of research-driven strategies in shaping Pakistan's future. The event commenced with a detailed RASTA Progress Report presented by Dr. Faheem Jehangir, Project Director of RASTA. He highlighted that the conference would feature five technical sessions and two showcase sessions, covering topics such as food and agriculture, fiscal management, and more. These sessions brought together 17 research teams to present their findings, fostering an extensive knowledge network and promoting high-quality, evidence-based policy research.

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Shah from Sukkur IBA University presented a study focusing on the mental health challenges faced by healthcare professionals in Pakistan. Shah's research underscored the severe impact of resource shortages, such as inadequate staffing and insufficient mental health support systems, which contribute to the high levels of stress and burnout among healthcare workers. He proposed several policy recommendations, including the implementation of a General Practitioner (GP) system that could alleviate pressure on specialists and a national initiative for enhanced training of healthcare providers to better manage stress and improve overall healthcare delivery. Aamer Raza from the University of Peshawar then provided a critical examination of the 18th Amendment's impact on Pakistan's higher education system. His analysis focused on the governance and funding challenges that have emerged since the



devolution of powers to the provinces. Raza argued that the decentralization has led to inconsistencies in educational standards across regions and created significant hurdles in terms of funding allocation. He suggested a re-evaluation of the amendment's implementation, advocating for stronger federal oversight to ensure uniformity and quality in higher

education. The session concluded with Rafiqul Karim, Member of the Social Sector, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, who provided closing remarks synthesizing the insights from the presentations and emphasizing the need for integrated policy approaches to address the multifaceted challenges in education and healthcare. NEWS DESK

NATIONAL NEWS

Taxing absentee landlords could generate Rs79.61bn: experts

ABDUL RASHEED AZAD
ISLAMABAD: A research study has revealed that the government of Pakistan can generate at least Rs79.61 billion annually by taxing absentee landlords in Pakistan.

Irfan Ahmad Baig from MNS University of Agriculture Multan, while sharing the findings of his research study, on the concluding day of the 4th RASTA Conference 2024, organized by Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), here on Wednesday.

Baig, while discussing the complexities of taxing rental income in the agriculture sector, stated that the sector can raise substantial revenue for public services and equitable growth, saying that reforms are needed for better tax collection and compliance, especially for rental incomes.

Baig in his presentation shed light on the skewed land distribution in Pakistan, where a small percentage of large landowners hold a significant portion of the land. He argued for comprehensive agrarian tax reform to address this disparity and suggested that taxing absentee landlords could be an

effective way to generate revenue for public services and infrastructure development.

Khair Muhammad Kakar from UET Khunjer presented a comprehensive analysis of the impact of government policies on olive production in Pakistan. His research highlighted that while government initiatives have promoted olive cultivation, several challenges persist, such as limited technical knowledge among farmers, inadequate access to quality plant materials, and insufficient processing facilities. Kakar emphasized the need for consistent and targeted policy interventions to overcome these barriers and enhance olive production, particularly, in regions like Balochistan, which show considerable potential.

Khair Muhammad Kakar explored critical topics such as the impact of government policies on olive production in Pakistan, the political economy of wheat subsidy and food security in Gilgit-Balistan, and taxing rental income in agriculture.

Saranjam Muhammad from Karakoram International University, Gilgit, provided an in-depth examination of the political

economy of wheat subsidies and food security in Gilgit-Balistan. His study revealed that despite the region receiving substantial wheat subsidies since the 1970s, food insecurity remains a significant issue, affecting over 50 per cent of the population. Baig's analysis identified inefficiencies in the subsidy distribution, with wealthier households benefiting disproportionately. He recommended a targeted subsidy approach, improved transparency in distribution, and support for local agriculture to address these inefficiencies and enhance food security in the region.

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the 2024 iteration expanding its urban representation and covering 14 additional districts. For the first time, the survey includes digital data collection methods, ensuring a broader scope and more detailed data on education, employment, household assets, and new metrics such as financial literacy and care work employment. The PPHS 2024 also introduced new modules, focusing on CNIC/B-form registrations, out-of-pocket expenditures, and subjective welfare, making it one of the most extensive panel surveys ever conducted in Pakistan.

This landmark survey is vital for policymakers, economists, and researchers, providing critical data to understand the socio-economic transitions in the country. With a robust sample of over 8,500 households, the PPHS 2024 allows for deeper analysis of urban and rural dynamics, offering a clearer picture of poverty, labor mobility, and household consumption patterns. The findings will help shape future policies aimed at addressing social inequality, employment trends, and household security, underscoring the importance of long-term data tracking in socio-economic