PIVRA

Official Data Sources on Pakistan: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Analysts

Which Pakistani institutions publish which data, how current it is, where figures conflict, and how to build a documented, defensible series.

Pakistan Market Guide

October 2026

Pakistan Institute for Vision Research and Action

Contents

What this guide covers, in the order an importer meets it.

1. Start with the question, not the portal . . . 3

2. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics . . . 3

3. State Bank, Finance Division and FBR . . . 4

4. Companies, markets and regulators . . . 4

5. Provincial sources . . . 4

6. International sources . . . 5

7. Practical cautions . . . 5

8. Building a defensible series . . . 6

9. Common mistakes . . . 6

10. How PIVRA can help . . . 6

Sources . . . 6

Questions and answers . . . 7

Reliable research on Pakistan starts with official data. The challenge for analysts outside the country is knowing which institution holds which series, how current it is, what the definition covers and where the figures conflict. A number that looks authoritative on a ministry website may be a provisional estimate, a fiscal-year aggregate or a different definition from the one in the central bank's series.

This guide maps the main federal, provincial and international sources, explains the practical limits of each and sets out a method for building a defensible series. It is written for researchers, investors and analysts who need to cite a figure and defend it, not just quote it.

1. Start with the question, not the portal

Different questions need different sources. A market size question may need household consumption, imports, industry output and prices. A regulatory question needs the law, the SRO and the regulator's practice. A country risk question needs the balance of payments, reserves, debt and the budget. Start with the indicator, then find the institution that owns it, then check the definition.

Question	First source	Cross-check
Population, labour, households	PBS census and surveys	World Bank, UN
GDP, inflation, trade	PBS and SBP	IMF, World Bank
Fiscal policy and budget	Finance Division	IMF country reports
Tax and customs	FBR	Finance Act, SROs
Companies and markets	SECP, PSX	Company filings
Sector regulation	PTA, NEPRA, OGRA, DRAP	Sector reports
Provincial spending	Provincial budget documents	Provincial bureaus
Cross-country comparison	World Bank, IMF, UN	National sources

2. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

The PBS is the national statistics office. Its main products include:

- **Population and Housing Census.** The 2023 census was Pakistan's first digital census and is the current population baseline.
- **Labour Force Survey**, covering employment, unemployment, occupations and informality.
- **Household Integrated Economic Survey** and **Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey**, covering income, consumption, education and health.
- **Price statistics**: Consumer Price Index, Wholesale Price Index and the weekly Sensitive Price Indicator.
- **National accounts**: GDP, gross fixed capital formation and sector value added.
- **Merchandise trade**, published monthly, and industrial production indicators.

Survey rounds are not annual for every series, so the latest available year differs by indicator. Record the survey year, the sample and the definition alongside the figure. A household consumption estimate from

a survey three years old is not the same as a current national accounts estimate.

3. State Bank, Finance Division and FBR

State Bank of Pakistan. The SBP publishes the balance of payments, services exports and imports by category and country, workers' remittances, foreign direct investment by country and sector, banking statistics, interest and exchange rates, and the Foreign Exchange Manual. Its economic data portal provides downloadable time series, usually monthly. Recent months are often revised, so note the retrieval date and the revision status.

Finance Division. The Finance Division publishes the Pakistan Economic Survey shortly before the federal budget, with chapters on each sector, and the federal budget documents, including the annual budget statement and the federal development programme. The Economic Survey is a useful overview, but it is a government document with a policy narrative; use the underlying tables and cross-check with the SBP and PBS.

Federal Board of Revenue. The FBR publishes tax laws, statutory regulatory orders, customs tariffs and tax statistics. SROs are the main way tax and duty rates change between budgets, so they are essential for any analysis of a sector's tax position. A rate quoted from a budget speech is not a legal rate until the Finance Act and the SRO are in force.

4. Companies, markets and regulators

SECP maintains the company register and publishes disclosures of listed companies, together with data on insurance, non-bank finance and capital markets. Its company search is useful for ownership and filing checks; the annual return and financial statements are the primary documents.

Pakistan Stock Exchange filings provide annual reports, quarterly accounts and material information for listed companies. A listed company's annual report is often the best source for segment revenue, capacity, related-party transactions and risk factors.

Sector regulators publish licensing data, tariff determinations and sector reports. NEPRA's State of Industry report covers power generation, transmission, distribution and tariffs; the PTA publishes telecom indicators and quality-of-service data; OGRA publishes oil and gas licensing and product prices; DRAP publishes pharmaceutical registrations and pricing.

Trade bodies such as the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan and the Pakistan Software Export Board publish export promotion information and sector data. Treat promotional material as a lead, not a primary statistic.

5. Provincial sources

Much of Pakistan's spending and service delivery is provincial, so provincial sources are essential for analysis below the national level:

- Provincial budget documents and annual development programmes.
- Provincial bureaus of statistics, which publish development statistics and, with UNICEF support, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys on child and household wellbeing.

- Provincial revenue authorities, which publish rules and data on sales tax on services: Punjab Revenue Authority, Sindh Revenue Board, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority and Balochistan Revenue Authority.
- Provincial departments for health, education, agriculture, industry, environment and labour.
- Development authorities and special economic zone authorities for land, zoning and industrial data.

Some provincial material is published only in Urdu or only on provincial portals, which is a common reason analysts abroad miss it. District-level data are especially uneven. If the decision is city-specific, a national average may not be a substitute for the local series.

6. International sources

International databases are useful for cross-country comparison and for filling gaps, but they are usually lagged and harmonised. Use them as a cross-check, not as a substitute for the national source.

Source	Use	Caveat
World Bank Open Data	GDP, population, trade, development indicators	Lagged; harmonised definitions
IMF Data and country reports	Macro, fiscal, balance of payments, programme targets	Staff estimates; programme context
UN Comtrade	Bilateral merchandise trade	Reporter differences; re-exports
ITC Trade Map	Trade competitiveness and market access	Derived from Comtrade
OECD, ILO, UNESCO, WHO	Comparable social, labour and health data	Lagged; modelled estimates

7. Practical cautions

1. **Fiscal years run July to June.** FY2025-26 means July 2025 to June 2026. Mixing fiscal and calendar years is a common error.
2. **Classifications change.** Services trade moved to BPM6 and EBOPS 2010, and some categories were reorganised. Check definitions before building a long series.
3. **Headline figures differ.** Media reports, ministry statements and SBP data can give different figures for the same indicator because of revisions or definitions. Go to the primary series and state which one you used.
4. **Provisional and revised data.** GDP, balance of payments and FDI are revised. Keep the vintage and do not mix a provisional figure with a revised one in the same table.
5. **Nominal versus real.** Deflate with the correct price index and state the base year. A nominal growth rate during high inflation overstates real growth.
6. **Exchange rates.** Use the rate and date that match the transaction or the series; do not convert a stock at one rate and a flow at another without saying so.
7. **Informal economy.** Formal statistics understate some activity. State the coverage and do not present a formal-sector figure as the whole market.
8. **Portals change.** Official websites are restructured and file links break. Keep a copy of the source file with its retrieval date.

8. Building a defensible series

1. Define the indicator, unit, price basis, geography and period.
2. Identify the owning institution and the primary publication, not a secondary summary.
3. Download the file and record the URL, retrieval date, table number and vintage.
4. Check the definition and any break in the series.
5. Cross-check with one independent source.
6. Document any adjustment, interpolation or deflation.
7. Keep the raw file and the working file separately.
8. State the limitations in the note under the chart or table.

9. Common mistakes

1. **Quoting a media figure as official.** Go to the primary series.
2. **Mixing fiscal and calendar years.** Label every period.
3. **Ignoring revisions.** A figure downloaded last year may have changed.
4. **Using nominal growth as real growth.** Deflate and state the base.
5. **Treating a survey year as current.** Record the survey round.
6. **Using a national figure for a city decision.** Check provincial and district data.
7. **Assuming a budget speech is law.** Wait for the Finance Act and SRO.
8. **No retrieval record.** A broken link cannot be verified later.

10. How PIVRA can help

PIVRA compiles data and indicator compendia from these sources, with every series documented and referenced. Our policy and regulatory research and market research guide show how the data feed a decision. Request a quote.

Sources

All portals accessed 24 October 2026. Official series are revised; record the retrieval date and vintage.

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

State Bank of Pakistan.

Finance Division, Government of Pakistan.

Federal Board of Revenue.

Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan; Pakistan Stock Exchange.

PTA; NEPRA; OGRA; DRAP.

World Bank Open Data; IMF Data; UN Comtrade; ITC Trade Map.

Provincial finance departments, bureaus of statistics and revenue authorities.

Questions and answers

Where should I start when researching Pakistan?

Start with the indicator and the institution that owns it: PBS for population, labour, prices and national accounts; SBP for the balance of payments and financial data; Finance Division for the budget; FBR for tax and customs; SECP and PSX for companies.

Where can I find Pakistan GDP data?

The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics publishes national accounts and GDP. The State Bank and Finance Division also report GDP in their publications. Use the PBS series as the primary source and record the vintage, because estimates are revised.

Where can I find inflation and CPI data?

The PBS publishes the Consumer Price Index, Wholesale Price Index and weekly Sensitive Price Indicator. State the base year and the period, and do not compare a new base with an old series without a link.

Where can I find Pakistan trade data?

PBS publishes monthly merchandise trade; SBP publishes services trade and the balance of payments. UN Comtrade and ITC Trade Map are useful for bilateral comparisons and mirror statistics.

Where can I find foreign direct investment data?

The State Bank of Pakistan publishes FDI by country and sector, usually monthly and in the balance of payments. The Board of Investment publishes promotional summaries. Use the SBP series for analysis.

Where can I find company data?

SECP maintains the company register and listed company disclosures; the Pakistan Stock Exchange publishes annual reports and material information. For unlisted companies, SECP filings and the company itself are the main sources.

Where can I find provincial data?

Provincial finance departments publish budgets and development programmes, provincial bureaus of statistics publish development statistics and MICS, and provincial revenue authorities publish service sales tax rules. Some material is Urdu-only.

What fiscal year does Pakistan use?

The fiscal year runs from 1 July to 30 June. FY2025-26 means July 2025 to June 2026. Label every period and do not mix fiscal and calendar years.

Why do official figures differ between sources?

Revisions, different definitions, provisional estimates and different reporting entities can produce different figures for the same indicator. Go to the primary series, state which one you used and keep the vintage.

How current is official data?

Monthly series can be current within weeks; survey data can be years old; national accounts and FDI are revised. Record the retrieval date and the reference period, and check whether the figure is provisional or revised.

Can I use World Bank or IMF data instead?

Yes for cross-country comparison and gap-filling, but they are usually lagged and harmonised. Use them as a cross-check, not a substitute for the national source.

How should I cite and store the data?

Record the URL, retrieval date, table number, vintage and definition. Keep a copy of the raw file and a separate working file, and note any adjustment, deflation or interpolation in the table footnote.