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## Pakistan, China Ink Deal for Economic Research, Training

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Pakistan and China's Development Research Center sign an agreement to foster joint economic research, training, and expert exchanges, strengthening bilateral ties.

Pakistan's Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives has forged a strategic partnership with China's Development Research Center (DRC) to advance economic collaboration through joint research, training programs, and expert exchanges. The agreement, finalized on August 3, 2025, during a meeting in Beijing between Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal and DRC President Lu Hao, aims to bolster Pakistan's economic framework by leveraging China's expertise, according to state-run Radio Pakistan. This initiative aligns with Pakistan's broader goal of achieving a \$1 trillion economy by 2035 under the Uraan Pakistan vision.

The agreement focuses on enhancing Pakistan's export-led growth and technological capabilities, critical components of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Minister Iqbal emphasized that Pakistan seeks to learn from China's economic model, particularly in scientific planning and industrial development, to drive sustainable growth, as reported by Arab News. The partnership includes training programs for Pakistani officials and joint research to explore new trade avenues, especially in information technology (IT) and agriculture, aiming to tap into China's \$2 trillion import market. Posts on X highlighted public optimism about the deal's potential to boost Pakistan's economic resilience.

This collaboration builds on decades of Sino-Pakistani economic ties, including \$55.2 billion invested in CPEC projects like highways, power plants, and the Gwadar port, per the Georgetown Journal of International Affairs. However, challenges such as Pakistan's \$133.5 billion external debt and security concerns in regions like Balochistan, where CPEC projects face threats from separatist groups, remain hurdles, according to The Diplomat. Critics argue that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government must prioritize transparent governance to ensure equitable benefits, as past CPEC projects have faced scrutiny for limited local engagement, per the Carnegie Endowment.

The agreement signals Pakistan's determination to strengthen its economic foundation through strategic partnerships. By fostering expertise exchange and research, the initiative aims to address systemic inefficiencies and pave the way for a robust, competitive economy, though sustained efforts are needed to navigate fiscal and security challenges.