

# Duality in Linear Programming

## Optimization Methods in Management Science

### Master in Management

#### HEC Lausanne

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# Duality in Linear Programming

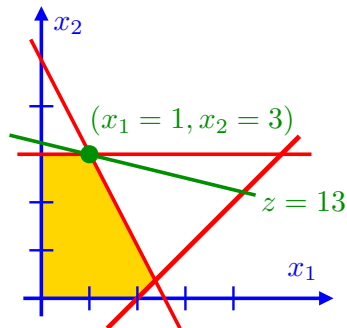
## Duality:

- Motivation
- Dual problem of a canonical LP
- Dualization rules
- Weak and strong duality
- Complementary slack theorem
- Economic interpretation of the dual variables at the optimum

# Motivation

Let's consider the following LP:

$$\begin{array}{llllll} \text{Max} & z = & x_1 & + & 4x_2 & \\ \text{s.t.} & & x_1 & - & x_2 & \leq 2 \\ & & 2x_1 & + & x_2 & \leq 5 \\ & & & & x_2 & \leq 3 \\ & & x_1 & , & x_2 & \geq 0 \end{array}$$



with a feasible solution:  $x_1 = 1, x_2 = 3$  and  $z = 13$

**How to find a bound  $w$  to this LP such that  $z \leq w$  for all the feasible solutions ?**

# Reminders About Inequalities

- Every conical combination (non-negative coefficients) of inequalities of the same type still provides a valid inequation
- Every linear combination of equalities still provides a valid equation
- It is possible to combine inequations with equations to obtain a valid inequation

# Reminders About Inequalities: Examples

## Example 1:

$$\begin{array}{rclclcl} 2x_1 & + & x_2 & \leq & 3 & \times & 3 \\ 5x_1 & - & 3x_2 & \leq & 5 & \times & 1 \\ \hline 11x_1 & & & \leq & 14 & & \end{array}$$

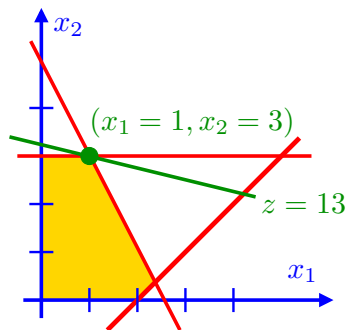
## Example 2:

$$\begin{array}{rclclcl} x_1 & + & 2x_2 & \leq & 3 & \times & 4 \\ 3x_1 & - & x_2 & = & 5 & \times & -1 \\ x_1 & + & x_2 & \geq & 2 & \times & -2 \\ \hline -x_1 & + & 7x_2 & \leq & 3 & & \end{array}$$

# How to Find a Bound to a LP ?

Same example has before :

$$\begin{array}{llllll} \text{Max} & z = & x_1 & + & 4x_2 & \\ \text{s.t.} & & x_1 & - & x_2 & \leq 2 \\ & & 2x_1 & + & x_2 & \leq 5 \\ & & & & x_2 & \leq 3 \\ & & x_1 & , & x_2 & \geq 0 \end{array}$$



with a feasible solution:  $x_1 = 1, x_2 = 3$  and  $z = 13$

## How to Find a Bound to a LP (Cont'd) ?

Let's multiply by 4 the second constraint ( $2x_1 + x_2 \leq 5$ ):

$$8x_1 + 4x_2 \leq 20$$

For every pair  $(x_1, x_2)$  with **non-negative** values:

$$x_1 + 4x_2 \leq 8x_1 + 4x_2$$

Consequently, for every feasible solution of the LP we have that:

$$z = x_1 + 4x_2 \leq 8x_1 + 4x_2 \leq 20$$

We conclude that the value of the optimal solution is **bounded** by 20:

$$z^* \leq 20$$

## Can We Do Better ?

The inequation that we get by adding the first constraint and 5 times the third one is:

$$\begin{array}{rclclcl} x_1 & - & x_2 & \leq & 2 & \times & 1 \\ & & x_2 & \leq & 3 & \times & 5 \\ \hline x_1 & + & 4x_2 & \leq & 17 & & \end{array}$$

For every feasible solution of the LP, we get that:

$$z = x_1 + 4x_2 \leq 17$$

This result also holds at the optimum:

$$z^* \leq 17$$



## Can We Do Better ? (Cont'd)

- By adding  $1/2$  times the second constraint and  $7/2$  times the third one, we get:

$$\begin{array}{rclclcl} 2x_1 & + & x_2 & \leq & 5 & \times & 1/2 \\ & & x_2 & \leq & 3 & \times & 7/2 \\ \hline x_1 & + & 4x_2 & \leq & 13 & & \end{array}$$

- For every feasible solution, we get:

$$z = x_1 + 4x_2 \leq 13$$

- We conclude that the LP is bounded by 13
- As the feasible solution  $x_1 = 1, x_2 = 3$  has a value of 13 corresponding to the value of this bound, then the inequality  $z = x_1 + 4x_2 \leq 13$  gives us an **optimality certificate**
- Concretely, it is not possible to find another feasible solution for which the objective function value is strictly larger than 13

# Generalization

- Every conical combination of constraints of a canonical LP is still valid, i.e. is satisfied by the system of constraints:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} a_{11}x_1 & + & \dots & + & a_{1n}x_n & \leq & b_1 \\ \dots & & \dots & & \dots & & \dots \\ a_{m1}x_1 & + & \dots & + & a_{mn}x_n & \leq & b_m \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{l} \times y_1 \geq 0 \\ \\ \times y_m \geq 0 \end{array}$$

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$$\sum_{i=1}^m (y_i a_{i1})x_1 + \dots + \sum_{i=1}^m (y_i a_{in})x_n \leq \sum_{i=1}^m y_i b_i$$

- If  $c_1 \leq \sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{i1}, \dots, c_n \leq \sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{in}$ , then we have that

$$z = c_1x_1 + \dots + c_nx_n \leq \sum_{i=1}^m (y_i a_{i1})x_1 + \dots + \sum_{i=1}^m (y_i a_{in})x_n \leq \sum_{i=1}^m y_i b_i$$

since  $x_1 \geq 0, \dots, x_n \geq 0$

## Generalization (Cont'd)

To find the best upper bound, i.e. the smallest one, we need to solve the following LP:

$$\begin{array}{ll}\text{Min} & w = \sum_{i=1}^m y_i b_i \\ \text{s.t.} & \sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{i1} \geq c_1 \\ & \dots \\ & \sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{in} \geq c_n \\ & y_1, \dots, y_m \geq 0\end{array}$$

This problem is called **the dual linear program** of the initial **primal** canonical LP

# Dual Program of a Canonical LP

To each canonical LP:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{Max} & z = \mathbf{c}\mathbf{x} \\ \text{s.t.} & \mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} \leq \mathbf{b} \\ & \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0} \end{array} \quad (\text{PLP})$$

corresponds a **dual program** given by:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{Min} & w = \mathbf{y}\mathbf{b} \\ \text{s.t.} & \mathbf{A}^T\mathbf{y}^T \geq \mathbf{c}^T \\ & \mathbf{y} \geq \mathbf{0} \end{array} \quad (\text{DLP})$$

## Important Remark

We consider here  $\mathbf{y}$  and  $\mathbf{c}$  as **row** vectors and  $\mathbf{b}$  as a **column** vector. By doing so,  $\mathbf{y}\mathbf{b}$  is the scalar product between  $\mathbf{y}$  and  $\mathbf{b}$ . The product  $\mathbf{A}^T\mathbf{y}^T$  is a column vector as well as  $\mathbf{c}^T$ . Note that  $\mathbf{A}^T\mathbf{y}^T \geq \mathbf{c}^T \iff \mathbf{y}\mathbf{A} \geq \mathbf{c}$

## Dual Program of a Canonical LP (Cont'd)

- The variables  $\mathbf{y}$  given by

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{Min} & w = \mathbf{y}^T \mathbf{b} \\ \text{s.t.} & \mathbf{A}^T \mathbf{y}^T \geq \mathbf{c}^T \\ & \mathbf{y} \geq \mathbf{0} \end{array} \quad (\text{DLP})$$

are called **decision variables** of the **dual** problem and are denoted by  $\mathbf{y}_D$

- The **dual** problem can also be expressed in **standard** form by adding some **slack** variables  $\mathbf{y}_E$
- In the canonical form,  $\mathbf{A}^T \mathbf{y}^T \geq \mathbf{c}^T$  is expressed as  $-\mathbf{A}^T \mathbf{y}^T \leq -\mathbf{c}^T$
- Slack variables  $\mathbf{y}_E$  are defined as:

$$-\mathbf{A}^T \mathbf{y}_D^T + \mathbf{I} \mathbf{y}_E^T = -\mathbf{c}_D^T \iff -\mathbf{y}_D \mathbf{A} + \mathbf{y}_E \mathbf{I} = -\mathbf{c}_D$$

# Weak Duality Theorem (1)

## Theorem

*Let  $\mathbf{x}$  ( $= \mathbf{x}_D$ ) be a feasible solution of a canonical LP and  $\mathbf{y}$  ( $= \mathbf{y}_D$ ) a feasible solution of its dual problem, then*

$$\mathbf{c}\mathbf{x} \leq \mathbf{y}\mathbf{b}$$

**Proof :**

- $\mathbf{y}$  is a dual solution:

$$\mathbf{c}\mathbf{x} \leq (\mathbf{y}\mathbf{A})\mathbf{x} \quad \text{since } \mathbf{x} \geq \mathbf{0} \text{ and } \mathbf{c} \leq \mathbf{y}\mathbf{A}$$

- $\mathbf{x}$  is a primal solution:

$$\mathbf{y}(\mathbf{A}\mathbf{x}) \leq \mathbf{y}\mathbf{b} \quad \text{since } \mathbf{y} \geq \mathbf{0} \text{ and } \mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} \leq \mathbf{b}$$

- Then:

$$\mathbf{c}\mathbf{x} \leq \mathbf{y}\mathbf{A}\mathbf{x} \leq \mathbf{y}\mathbf{b}$$

# Weak Duality Theorem (2)

## Corollary

*Let  $\mathbf{x}$  ( $= \mathbf{x}_D$ ) be a feasible solution of PLP of value  $z$  and  $\mathbf{y}$  ( $= \mathbf{y}_D$ ) a feasible solution of DLP of value  $w$ . If  $z = w$ , then the solutions  $\mathbf{x}$  and  $\mathbf{y}$  are optimal for their respective problem.*

## Important Remark

If PLP has no finite optimum, then its dual cannot have a feasible solution without contradicting the weak duality theorem!

# Dual Problem of a General LP

- Similarly to the canonical case, we look for a combination of constraints to obtain a new valid constraint providing an upper bound on the optimal value
- Multipliers providing a new valid constraint of **type**  $\leq$  when we combine them:

$$\begin{array}{llllllll} a_{i1}x_1 & + & \dots & + & a_{in}x_n & \leq & b_i & \times y_i & (y_i \geq 0) \\ a_{k1}x_1 & + & \dots & + & a_{kn}x_n & = & b_k & \times y_k & (y_k \in \mathbb{R}) \\ a_{r1}x_1 & + & \dots & + & a_{rn}x_n & \geq & b_r & \times y_r & (y_r \leq 0) \end{array}$$



## Dual Problem of a General LP (Cont'd)

If we impose the following constraints:

- $\sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{ij} \geq c_j$  if  $x_j \geq 0$
- $\sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{ij} = c_j$  if  $x_j \in \mathbb{R}$
- $\sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{ij} \leq c_j$  if  $x_j \leq 0$

then we get an upper bound for each of the terms of type  $c_j x_j$  in the objective function. Indeed:

- $c_j x_j \leq (\sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{ij}) x_j$  if  $\sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{ij} \geq c_j$  and  $x_j \geq 0$
- $c_j x_j = (\sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{ij}) x_j$  if  $\sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{ij} = c_j$  and  $x_j \in \mathbb{R}$
- $c_j x_j \leq (\sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{ij}) x_j$  if  $\sum_{i=1}^m y_i a_{ij} \leq c_j$  and  $x_j \leq 0$

# Dualization Rules

## Dualization Rules

| Max problem                      | $\longleftrightarrow$ | Min problem                      |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Variable $x_j \geq 0$            | $\longleftrightarrow$ | $j$ th constraint of type $\geq$ |
| Variable $x_j \in \mathbb{R}$    | $\longleftrightarrow$ | $j$ th constraint of type $=$    |
| Variable $x_j \leq 0$            | $\longleftrightarrow$ | $j$ th constraint of type $\leq$ |
| $i$ th constraint of type $\leq$ | $\longleftrightarrow$ | Variable $y_i \geq 0$            |
| $i$ th constraint of type $=$    | $\longleftrightarrow$ | Variable $y_i \in \mathbb{R}$    |
| $i$ th constraint of type $\geq$ | $\longleftrightarrow$ | Variable $y_i \leq 0$            |

## Example

$$\begin{array}{lcl}
 \text{(PLP)} \left\{ \begin{array}{ll} \text{Max } z = & \textcolor{red}{1}x_1 + \textcolor{red}{3}x_2 \\ \text{s.t.} & \textcolor{blue}{1}x_1 + \textcolor{blue}{-1}x_2 \leq \textcolor{green}{2} \\ & \textcolor{blue}{2}x_1 + \textcolor{blue}{1}x_2 = \textcolor{green}{5} \\ & \textcolor{blue}{1}x_2 \leq \textcolor{green}{3} \\ & x_1 \in \textcolor{orange}{\mathbb{R}} \\ & x_2 \geq 0 \end{array} \right. \Rightarrow \begin{array}{l} \text{Min} \\ y_1 \geq \textcolor{violet}{0} \\ y_2 \in \textcolor{violet}{\mathbb{R}} \\ y_3 \geq \textcolor{violet}{0} \\ \text{1st const. of type } = \\ \text{2nd const. of type } \geq \end{array}
 \end{array}$$

$$\text{(DLP)} \left\{ \begin{array}{ll} \text{Min } w = & \textcolor{green}{2}y_1 + \textcolor{green}{5}y_2 + \textcolor{green}{3}y_3 \\ \text{s.t.} & \textcolor{blue}{1}y_1 + \textcolor{blue}{2}y_2 = \textcolor{red}{1} \\ & \textcolor{blue}{-1}y_1 + \textcolor{blue}{1}y_2 + \textcolor{blue}{1}y_3 \geq \textcolor{red}{3} \\ & y_1, y_3 \geq 0 \\ & y_2 \in \mathbb{R} \end{array} \right.$$

# Important Remarks

- If PLP is a max problem (resp. min), then DLP is a min problem (resp. max)
- If PLP has  $n$  variables and  $m$  constraints, then its dual problem has  $m$  variables and  $n$  constraints
- Each dual variable corresponds to a constraint of PLP and each dual constraint corresponds to a variable of PLP
- The dual problem of DLP is PLP

## Dual Basic Solution in a Tableau (1)

### Important Result

A basis in a tableau **univocally** defines a basis of the **dual** problem in its **standard** form. The row vector  $\mathbf{y} = (-\gamma_D \mid -\gamma_E)$  that can be found in the last row of a tableau is a **basic solution of the dual problem**. The  $m$  dual non-basic variables are the ones corresponding to the  $m$  primal basic variables. Conversely, the  $n$  dual basic variables are the ones corresponding to the  $n$  non-basic primal variables. The **value** of this dual solution is  $\zeta$ . Moreover,  $\mathbf{y}_D = -\gamma_E$  and  $\mathbf{y}_E = -\gamma_D$

## Dual Basic Solution in a Tableau (2)

Concretely, the dual basic solution can be read in the last row of the tableau:

$$T_B = \begin{array}{c|c|c|c} & x_D & x_E & z \\ \hline & B^{-1}A & B^{-1} & 0 & \beta \\ \hline & -\gamma_D & -\gamma_E & 1 & \zeta \end{array}$$

$y_E = (y_{m+1} \dots y_{m+n})$ 
 $y_D = (y_1 \dots y_m)$

A sketch of the demonstration of this important result is provided in the appendix at the end of this presentation

# Strong Duality Theorem

## Theorem (Strong Duality Theorem)

*If a standard linear program has an optimal solution  $\mathbf{x}^* = (\mathbf{x}_D^* \mid \mathbf{x}_E^*)$  of value  $z^* = \mathbf{c}_D \mathbf{x}_D^*$  then its dual problem has also an optimal solution  $\mathbf{y}^* = (\mathbf{y}_D^* \mid \mathbf{y}_E^*)$ . Moreover, the value of this solution is  $w^* = \mathbf{y}_D^* \mathbf{b} = z^*$*

**Proof.** Let's consider the optimal tableau provided by the simplex algorithm:

$$T_B = \begin{array}{c|cc|c|c} & \mathbf{x}_D & \mathbf{x}_E & z & \\ \hline & \mathbf{B}^{-1} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{B}^{-1} & 0 & \beta \\ \hline & -\gamma_D & -\gamma_E & 1 & \zeta \\ \hline & \mathbf{y}_E & \mathbf{y}_D & & \end{array}$$

# Strong Duality Theorem

The tableau is optimal:

$$-\gamma_D \geq 0 \quad \text{and} \quad -\gamma_E \geq 0$$

and its dual basic solution

$$\mathbf{y} = (\mathbf{y}_D \mid \mathbf{y}_E) = (-\gamma_E \mid -\gamma_D)$$

is feasible. As this solution has the same value as the primal basic solution, then it is optimal !



# Relationship between PLP and DLP

The table below summarizes the relationship between PLP and DLP:

|          | DLP         |             |             |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|          | fo          | onb         | nfs         |
| PLP: fo  | <b>SD</b>   | $\emptyset$ | $\emptyset$ |
| PLP: onb | $\emptyset$ | $\emptyset$ | <b>WD</b>   |
| PLP: nfs | $\emptyset$ | <b>WD</b>   | <b>Pos</b>  |

fo = finite optimum, onb = optimum not bounded, nfs = no feasible solution,  
**SD** = **Strong Duality**, **WD** = **Weak Duality**, **Pos** = Possible,  $\emptyset$  = empty set

# Complementary Slackness Theorem

## Theorem (Complementary Slackness Theorem)

Let  $\mathbf{x} = (\mathbf{x}_D \mid \mathbf{x}_E)$  be a feasible solution to standard LP and  $\mathbf{y} = (\mathbf{y}_D \mid \mathbf{y}_E)$  a feasible solution of its dual problem. These solutions are optimal for their respective problem if and only if

$$\mathbf{y}_E \mathbf{x}_D = 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \mathbf{y}_D \mathbf{x}_E = 0$$

**Remark.** As solutions  $\mathbf{x}$  and  $\mathbf{y}$  are feasible, they are non-negative. Consequently:

$$\mathbf{y}_E \mathbf{x}_D = 0 \quad \Longleftrightarrow \quad y_{m+j} x_j = 0 \quad \forall j = 1, \dots, n$$

and

$$\mathbf{y}_D \mathbf{x}_E = 0 \quad \Longleftrightarrow \quad y_i x_{n+i} = 0 \quad \forall i = 1, \dots, m$$

## Complementary Slackness Theorem : Example

We consider the following LP:

$$\begin{array}{llllll} \text{Max} & z = & x_1 & - & 2x_2 & + & 3x_3 \\ \text{s.t.} & & x_1 & + & x_2 & - & 2x_3 \leq 1 \\ & & 2x_1 & - & x_2 & - & 3x_3 \leq 4 \\ & & x_1 & + & x_2 & + & 5x_3 \leq 2 \\ & & x_1 & , & x_2, & & x_3 \geq 0 \end{array}$$

**Statement** : the optimal solution is  $x_1 = 9/7, x_2 = 0, x_3 = 1/7$ .

Can we check this statement with the **complementary slackness theorem** ?

## Complementary Slackness Theorem : Example (Cont'd)

- Dual Problem :

$$\begin{array}{llllll} \text{Min} & w = & y_1 & + & 4y_2 & + & 2y_3 \\ \text{s.t.} & & y_1 & + & 2y_2 & + & y_3 \geq 1 \\ & & y_1 & - & y_2 & + & y_3 \geq -2 \\ & & -2y_1 & - & 3y_2 & + & 5y_3 \geq 3 \\ & & y_1 & , & y_2, & & y_3 \geq 0 \end{array}$$

- $x_1, x_2, x_3$  are primal feasible
- Now let's see what complementary slackness would tell us about an optimal solution  $y_1, y_2, y_3$  of the dual. Variables  $x_1$  and  $x_3$  are non-zero, so :

$$\begin{array}{rclclcl} y_1 & + & 2y_2 & + & y_3 & = & 1 \\ -2y_1 & - & 3y_2 & + & 5y_3 & = & 3 \end{array}$$

- Checking the primal, we see that the alleged optimal solution shows some slack in the second constraint, so  $y_2 = 0$
- Plugging that in, we get  $y_1 = 2/7, y_2 = 0, y_3 = 5/7$

## Complementary Slackness Theorem : Example (Cont'd)

- One can check that this solution is dual feasible
- As  $y_1, y_3 > 0$ , we need to check that, in the primal, the first and the third constraints have no slack
- They don't ! Complementary slackness holds !
- We conclude that

$$x_1 = 9/7, x_2 = 0, x_3 = 1/7$$

is the **primal optimal solution** and that

$$y_1 = 2/7, y_2 = 0, y_3 = 5/7$$

is the **dual optimal solution** !

## Dual Variables at the Optimum

- If a standard LP has a finite optimum, this is also the case for its dual problem et we have that:

$$z^* = \sum_{j=1}^n c_j x_j^* = \sum_{i=1}^m y_i^* b_i = w^*$$

- If the primal solution is non-degenerated, then the optimal value of the dual variable  $y_i$  represents the **marginal price** of resource  $i$  at the optimum:

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial b_i} z^* = y_i^*$$

## Dual Variables at the Optimum (Cont'd)

- In other words,  $y_i^*$  is the potential increase of the optimal value of the problem if the resource  $i$ , limited to  $b_i$ , is increased by one unit (we assume that the current basis keeps optimal)
- Note that this interpretation is not valid if the primal solution is degenerated (the basis changes but the optimal value keeps the same)

## Appendix. Dual Basic Solution in a Tableau

A basis in a tableau univocally defines a basis of the dual problem in its standard form. Moreover, the basic solution associated with this dual basis can be read in the last row of the tableau.

$$T_B = \begin{array}{c|c|c|c} & x_D & x_E & z \\ \hline & B^{-1}A & B^{-1} & 0 \quad \beta \\ \hline & -\gamma_D & -\gamma_E & 1 \quad \zeta \end{array}$$

$y_E = (y_{m+1} \dots y_{m+n})$ 
 $y_D = (y_1 \dots y_m)$

In order to show that the vector  $y = (y_D \mid y_E) = (-\gamma_E \mid -\gamma_D)$  is a solution of the system of constraints of DLP, let's remind that

$$-\gamma_D = c_B B^{-1}A - c_D \quad \text{and} \quad -\gamma_E = c_B B^{-1}$$



## Appendix. Dual Basic Solution in a Tableau (Cont'd)

On the other hand, dual constraints  $\mathbf{y}_D \mathbf{A} \geq \mathbf{c}_D$  can be written in standard form as

$$-\mathbf{y}_D \mathbf{A} + \mathbf{y}_E \mathbf{I} = -\mathbf{c}_D$$

If we replace  $\mathbf{y}_D$  and  $\mathbf{y}_E$  by the expressions of  $-\gamma_E$  and  $-\gamma_D$ , we get

$$-\mathbf{y}_D \mathbf{A} + \mathbf{y}_E \mathbf{I} = \gamma_E \mathbf{A} - \gamma_D = -\mathbf{c}_B \mathbf{B}^{-1} \mathbf{A} + \mathbf{c}_B \mathbf{B}^{-1} \mathbf{A} - \mathbf{c}_D = -\mathbf{c}_D$$

This shows that  $\mathbf{y} = (\mathbf{y}_D \mid \mathbf{y}_E) = (-\gamma_E \mid -\gamma_D)$  is a solution of the standard dual problem.

## Appendix. Dual Basic Solution in a Tableau (Cont'd)

We still need to check that this dual solution is basic. As the reduced costs of the  $m$  basic primal variables are null (a basic primal variable has by construction a zero in its last row), then  $\mathbf{y}$  has at least  $m$  null components.

Indeed, the  $m$  dual non-basic variables are the ones corresponding to the the  $m$  primal basic variables. Conversely, the  $n$  dual basic variables are the ones corresponding to the  $n$  non-basic primal variables.

As a final remark, the value of the basis dual solution is given by

$$w = \mathbf{y}_D \mathbf{b} = \mathbf{c}_B \mathbf{B}^{-1} \mathbf{b} = \zeta$$

and has the same value as the one corresponding to the primal basic solution.