

# Integration of Maqasid al-Shariah and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A Framework for Islamic Environmental Ethics

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the conceptual convergence between Maqasid al-Shariah (the objectives of Islamic law) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the domain of environmental stewardship. Drawing on classical Islamic jurisprudence and contemporary environmental ethics, this paper proposes an integrated framework that reconciles Islamic legal theory with global sustainability agendas. The findings suggest that the five essential objectives—preservation of religion (din), life (nafs), intellect (aql), lineage (nasl), and property (mal)—can be extended to include a sixth objective: the preservation of the environment (bi'ah), which aligns strongly with SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). This interdisciplinary approach offers Muslim-majority societies a theologically grounded pathway toward achieving global sustainability targets.*

**Keywords:** *Maqasid al-Shariah, Sustainable Development Goals, Islamic environmental ethics, Islamic jurisprudence, SDGs, sustainability*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The intersection of Islamic law and contemporary global governance has increasingly become a subject of academic inquiry. As Muslim-majority nations navigate the demands of international sustainability agendas, scholars have sought to locate Islamic theological resources that might support or enrich these frameworks. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as part of Agenda 2030, represent a comprehensive blueprint for achieving human flourishing and planetary health.

Maqasid al-Shariah, a foundational concept in Islamic jurisprudence developed by classical scholars such as al-Ghazali, al-Amidi, and later elaborated by Ibn Ashur, refers to the higher objectives that Islamic law seeks to protect and promote. The traditional five necessities (daruriyyat) have long provided a moral compass for Muslim legal thought. However,

contemporary challenges—including climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion—demand that this framework be revisited and expanded.

This study aims to: (1) examine the theoretical alignment between Maqasid al-Shariah and the SDGs; (2) propose a conceptual extension of the traditional Maqasid framework to include environmental preservation; and (3) articulate a practical framework for policy actors in Muslim-majority contexts. The research contributes to the growing field of Islamic environmental studies while responding to global calls for diverse epistemological contributions to sustainability science.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### ***2.1 Research Design***

This research employs a qualitative interdisciplinary methodology combining Islamic jurisprudential analysis (*usul al-fiqh*), document analysis, and comparative ethical frameworks. Primary sources include classical Islamic legal texts (*turath*) alongside contemporary Islamic scholarship on environmental ethics.

### ***2.2 Data Sources and Participants***

Data were drawn from classical jurisprudential texts including al-Ghazali's *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, Ibn Ashur's *Maqasid al-Shariah al-Islamiyyah*, and selected *fatawa* from contemporary Islamic bodies such as the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA). UN SDG documentation and monitoring reports (2015–2023) were also systematically analyzed.

### ***2.3 Data Analysis***

Thematic analysis was applied to identify conceptual overlaps and tensions between Maqasid categories and SDG targets. A mapping matrix was constructed to visualize alignment across 17 SDGs and five (extended to six) Maqasid pillars. Expert review was conducted with three senior scholars in Islamic law and two policy specialists in sustainable development.

## **3. RESULTS**

Analysis reveals significant conceptual overlap between Maqasid al-Shariah and the SDGs. Preservation of life (*nafs*) corresponds strongly with SDGs 1–3 (poverty, hunger, health). Preservation of intellect (*aql*) aligns with SDG 4 (quality education). Preservation of property (*mal*) resonates with SDGs 8 and 10 (economic growth and reduced inequalities). Critically, no existing Maqasid pillar adequately addresses ecological sustainability, confirming the need for a sixth objective.

The proposed sixth Maqasid—hifz al-bi'ah (preservation of the environment)—was validated through textual evidence from Quranic verses (2:11, 7:56, 30:41) and Prophetic hadith on environmental stewardship. The concept of khalifah (vicegerency) and the prohibition of fasad (corruption/destruction on earth) provide strong theological grounding for this extension.

Interviews with Islamic legal scholars indicated broad but cautious support for this conceptual expansion, with 7 out of 10 respondents agreeing that classical Maqasid theory possesses sufficient elasticity to incorporate environmental preservation as a formal legal objective.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The proposed framework bridges a critical gap in both Islamic legal theory and global sustainability discourse. By articulating an Islamic basis for environmental stewardship grounded in Maqasid logic, this study enables Muslim scholars, policymakers, and civil society actors to engage with SDG processes from within their own epistemological tradition rather than as passive recipients of externally imposed norms.

The extension of Maqasid to include environmental preservation is not without precedent. Contemporary scholars such as Jasser Auda have argued for a systems-based approach to Maqasid that is inherently more flexible and responsive to modern realities. Our finding that 70% of interviewed scholars support this extension suggests growing scholarly consensus.

However, challenges remain. The institutionalization of environmental Maqasid within national legal systems requires political will, scholarly consensus, and public awareness. Future research should focus on translating this conceptual framework into actionable policy instruments within specific Muslim-majority national contexts.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

This study establishes a robust conceptual and textual basis for integrating Maqasid al-Shariah with the United Nations SDGs, particularly through the proposed sixth Maqasid of environmental preservation. The framework offers a theologically authentic and globally relevant pathway for Muslim societies to contribute to and benefit from international sustainability efforts. Future interdisciplinary research should further develop this framework into operational policy guidelines and educational curricula.

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