

Operationalizing *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* for Sustainable Development: A Public Policy Framework

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable development is inherently a problem of public choice: governments must allocate scarce resources, balance present and future interests, manage social and environmental trade-offs, and justify priorities across health, education, welfare, economic growth, institutional integrity, and ecological protection. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a universal policy architecture, but their implementation in Muslim-majority settings can benefit from normative frameworks that connect development priorities to locally authoritative conceptions of justice, welfare, responsibility, and public interest. This article develops a public policy framework for operationalizing *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* the higher objectives of Islamic law within sustainable-development governance. Methodologically, it combines doctrinal analysis of primary Islamic sources with a critical integrative review of public-policy and sustainability scholarship. The study finds that *maqāṣid* should not be reduced to a one-to-one checklist mapped mechanically onto the 17 SDGs. Its distinctive policy value lies in prioritization, harm prevention, public-interest reasoning, intergenerational responsibility, distributive justice, and evaluation of policy coherence. The article proposes a *Maqāṣid-Based Sustainable Public Policy Framework (MSPPF)* that links normative objectives to a seven-stage policy cycle: problem definition, objective setting, option appraisal, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and adaptive review. It also introduces a policy appraisal matrix covering necessity, benefit-harm balance, distributional justice, rights and dignity, ecological integrity, future generations, evidence, participation, and accountability. The framework is designed as a transparent public-reasoning tool rather than a substitute for legislation, democratic institutions, sectoral expertise, or empirical evidence. Recommendations are offered for governments, legislatures, regulators, *Sharī'ah* and ethics councils, development-finance institutions, civil society, data agencies, and researchers.

Introduction

Sustainable development is frequently presented as a technical agenda of targets, indicators, investment plans, and institutional reforms. At its core, however, it is a normative problem of public policy. Governments must decide which needs deserve priority, how benefits and burdens should be distributed, what risks are acceptable, how future generations should be represented in present decisions, and how economic objectives should be reconciled with human dignity and ecological limits. The 2030 Agenda describes sustainable development through an integrated vision of people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership and explicitly treats the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets as interconnected rather than independent policy silos (United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 2015).

For Muslim-majority societies, these questions are also discussed through the normative vocabulary of *Sharī'ah*, especially *maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. *Maqāṣid* refers to the purposes, ends, values, and interests that Islamic law seeks to realize. The classical tradition did not develop *maqāṣid* as a modern public-policy toolkit, yet it produced a sophisticated grammar of necessity, welfare, harm, prioritization, and social order. Al-Juwaynī's analysis of necessities, al-Ghazālī's articulation of the five essentials, al-Shāṭibī's systematic theory of purposes, and Ibn 'Āshūr's expansion toward freedom, order, equality, family, and civilizational concerns provide an intellectual basis for policy reasoning that extends beyond rule-by-rule legalism (al-Ghazālī, 1993; al-Juwaynī, 1997; al-Shāṭibī, 1997; Ibn 'Āshūr, 2006).

The attraction of maqāṣid for sustainable development is evident. Preservation of life resonates with health, food, water, safety, and climate resilience; preservation of intellect with education, knowledge, and information integrity; preservation of progeny with family stability and intergenerational responsibility; preservation of wealth with property, livelihoods, market integrity, and economic inclusion; and preservation of religion with moral agency, conscience, and the social conditions of faith. Contemporary scholarship has accordingly connected maqāṣid with human development, Islamic finance, environmental sustainability, social welfare, and the SDGs (Auda, 2008; Chapra, 2008; Harahap et al., 2023; Kamali, 2016).

Yet conceptual similarity does not automatically produce a workable policy framework. Much of the existing literature maps the five classical necessities onto selected SDGs, or treats maqāṣid as an ethical justification for a predetermined development intervention. Such mapping can be useful descriptively, but it risks what may be called maqāṣid-washing: attaching an Islamic label to policies without demonstrating how objectives were identified, trade-offs assessed, evidence evaluated, affected communities consulted, or outcomes monitored. A framework suitable for public policy must therefore explain not only what values matter but how those values structure decision processes.

This article addresses that implementation gap. It asks how maqāṣid can be operationalized within the ordinary policy cycle while remaining faithful to its juristic logic and compatible with the institutional realities of contemporary states. The paper treats public policy as distinct from fiqh and from siyasah shar'iyah, following Abdelgafar's (2018) argument that a maqāṣid approach to public policy must engage institutional design, governance, rights, ethics, political power, and implementation rather than merely produce legal rulings. The result is a Maqāṣid-Based Sustainable Public Policy Framework (MSPPF) designed for policy appraisal, coordination, budgeting, monitoring, and accountability.

The framework is intentionally non-theocratic in institutional form. Maqāṣid provides a normative and evaluative lens, but it does not displace constitutions, legislation, judicial review, democratic representation, professional expertise, sectoral regulation, or empirical evidence. Nor does the article claim that the SDGs are identical to Islamic objectives. The SDGs are a negotiated international policy agenda; maqāṣid is a normative tradition rooted in Islamic legal reasoning. Their relationship is therefore one of structured dialogue rather than equivalence. This distinction is essential for preserving both analytical rigor and normative integrity.

Problem Statement, Research Questions, and Contribution

The problem is not the absence of ethical language in sustainable-development debates. Both Islamic and international policy traditions contain extensive commitments to welfare, dignity, justice, environmental protection, and intergenerational responsibility. The problem is operationalization. Policymakers need procedures for converting broad values into priorities, instruments, budgets, implementation responsibilities, measurable indicators, and mechanisms for review. Without such procedures, maqāṣid risks remaining inspirational rather than governable.

A second problem is reductionism. The classical five necessities—religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth—are often converted into a fixed table and mechanically assigned to SDGs. This understates the hierarchy and relational character of maqāṣid. In the classical tradition, necessities, needs, and embellishments are ordered; benefits may conflict; harms vary in magnitude and probability; and the public interest cannot be established merely by attaching a preferred policy to one protected interest (al-Ghazālī, 1993; al-Shāṭibī, 1997). Sustainable-development policy likewise involves interactions and trade-offs rather than isolated goals. OECD work on policy coherence emphasizes synergies, conflicts, cross-border effects, and long-term impacts (OECD, 2019).

A third problem concerns institutional legitimacy. Public policy in plural states affects citizens with different religious, ideological, and social commitments. A maqāṣid-informed framework must therefore operate through public reasons that can be explained in terms of welfare, justice, evidence, rights, harm, stewardship, and accountable government. It should enrich public reasoning without turning contested juristic interpretations into automatically binding administrative commands.

Four research questions guide the study: (RQ1) What features of the primary maqāṣid tradition are most relevant to contemporary sustainable-development policymaking? (RQ2) Where do maqāṣid and the SDG architecture converge, and where should conceptual distinctions be preserved? (RQ3) How can maqāṣid be integrated into the policy cycle in a transparent and measurable manner? (RQ4) What institutional safeguards are necessary to prevent symbolic invocation, selective interpretation, policy incoherence, and the neglect of rights, evidence, or environmental limits?

The paper makes three contributions. First, it recenters primary Islamic sources and foundational maqāṣid texts instead of treating later SDG-mapping literature as the conceptual starting point. Second, it relocates maqāṣid from a static list of protected interests to a process of public policy appraisal involving priority, proportionality, evidence, distribution, future effects, and accountability. Third, it offers a structured policy framework and scorecard that can be empirically tested in specific sectors and jurisdictions.

Primary Normative Foundations of Maqāṣid Qur'ānic Normative Anchors

The Qur'ān does not present a modern taxonomy labelled 'the five maqāṣid.' The later juristic classification emerged through induction across scriptural commands, prohibitions, legal rules, and patterns of benefit and harm. This point is methodologically important: contemporary policy should not attribute modern frameworks directly to individual verses. Instead, Qur'ānic norms provide an ethical field within which jurists historically identified recurring purposes.

Several Qur'ānic themes are particularly relevant to sustainable public policy. Justice is commanded as a general social obligation (Qur'ān 16:90; 4:58). Human beings are entrusted with responsibility on earth (2:30; 6:165), while corruption and destructive disorder are condemned (7:56; 30:41). The created order is described in terms of balance, and human beings are warned not to transgress that balance (55:7-9). Waste and excess are prohibited (7:31), and protection of life is given exceptional moral weight (5:32). Economic relations are subject to requirements of consent and prohibitions on wrongful consumption of wealth (4:29), while distributive concerns appear in the instruction that wealth should not merely circulate among the rich (59:7). These themes do not generate ready-made policy instruments, but they establish normative constraints around justice, stewardship, harm, distribution, and responsible use of resources (The Qur'ān, 2004).

For public policy, the significance of these norms lies in their cross-sectoral character. Justice applies to taxation, welfare, education, health, environmental exposure, access to institutions, and digital governance. The prohibition of corruption concerns both ecological degradation and institutional abuse. The idea of balance is relevant to resource use and competing public interests. The notion of trust (amānah), though expressed through multiple scriptural contexts, supports an understanding of public office and resource management as responsibility rather than ownership. Thus, Qur'ānic norms function most coherently as evaluative principles across the policy system rather than as isolated sectoral rules.

Al-Juwaynī and the Emergence of Necessity-Based Reasoning

Al-Juwaynī (d. 1085) is among the important precursors of systematic maqāṣid reasoning. In *al-Burhān fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, he discusses necessities and public interests in the context of legal reasoning and recognizes that certain objectives concern the preservation of the social order itself (al-Juwaynī, 1997). His contribution is especially relevant to public policy because it shifts attention from isolated textual analogy toward the

consequences of law for fundamental human and social needs.

A necessity-based approach has direct policy implications. It requires governments to distinguish between catastrophic threats, serious needs, and desirable enhancements rather than treating all objectives as equally urgent. In budget terms, this means that preventing famine, epidemic disease, institutional collapse, or irreversible ecological harm normally warrants priority over projects that mainly improve convenience or prestige. The classical hierarchy is not a modern cost-benefit formula, but it provides a normative rationale for triage under scarcity.

Al-Ghazālī and the Five Essentials

Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) gives the best-known classical formulation of the five essentials in al-Mustaṣfā: preservation of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth. He situates these within the level of necessities (ḍarūriyyāt), below which social and human order is fundamentally impaired (al-Ghazālī, 1993). His formulation became enormously influential because it converted a broad concern with public welfare into a structured account of indispensable interests.

For modern public policy, the five essentials are best understood as domains of fundamental human and social security rather than narrow administrative portfolios. Preservation of life includes health systems, food security, clean water, public safety, disaster resilience, and protection from environmental hazards. Preservation of intellect concerns education, access to reliable knowledge, mental health, research, freedom from intoxicating or manipulative harms, and—today—information integrity. Preservation of progeny includes family wellbeing, child protection, maternal health, demographic resilience, and obligations to future generations. Preservation of wealth includes property security, livelihood, fair markets, financial stability, anti-corruption measures, and equitable access to economic opportunity. Preservation of religion concerns the conditions under which religious life, conscience, worship,

and moral communities can exist without coercion or persecution.

This policy interpretation should not imply that each domain is administratively independent. Air pollution affects life, wealth, progeny, and distributive justice. Poor education affects intellect, wealth, and long-term family wellbeing. Corruption damages wealth, institutions, trust, and access to essential services. Maqāṣid therefore encourages multidimensional appraisal rather than single-goal optimization.

Al-Shāṭibī: Induction, Hierarchy, and the Social Logic of Sharī'ah

Al-Shāṭibī (d. 1388) systematized maqāṣid more fully in al-Muwāfaqāt. His method emphasizes induction (istiqrā') across the legal corpus, the distinction among necessities (ḍarūriyyāt), needs (ḥājiyyāt), and embellishments (taḥṣīniyyāt), and the proposition that the Sharī'ah seeks human welfare in a comprehensive manner (al-Shāṭibī, 1997). For contemporary policy, three features are especially valuable: hierarchy, generality, and consequences.

Hierarchy enables prioritization under scarcity. Generality discourages the selective use of one rule while ignoring the broader legal-ethical system. Attention to consequences requires decision makers to ask what a policy actually produces, not merely how it is labelled. These features are closely aligned with modern demands for policy coherence and impact assessment. A policy that advances one objective while predictably undermining several higher-order interests should not be judged by its stated purpose alone.

Al-Shāṭibī also helps clarify why maqāṣid cannot be reduced to subjective claims of benefit. Public interest is bounded by the normative structure of Sharī'ah and by disciplined reasoning. In contemporary terms, policymakers cannot invoke maṣlaḥah to bypass constitutional rights, evidence, or legal procedure. Rather, maṣlaḥah reasoning should strengthen the duty to justify public action through transparent assessment of benefits, harms, alternatives, and distributional effects.

Ibn 'Āshūr and the Expansion from Preservation to Social Flourishing

Ibn 'Āshūr's twentieth-century Treatise on Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah is particularly significant for policy studies because it expands maqāṣid beyond a defensive vocabulary of preservation. He discusses order, freedom, rights, equality, civility, and the family system, and treats maqāṣid as a methodology for renewal in changing social conditions (Ibn 'Āshūr, 2006). This expansion makes it easier to connect maqāṣid with institutional design and public governance.

The move from 'preserving' existing goods to enabling flourishing is critical for sustainable development. Public policy is not limited to preventing death, ignorance, poverty, or family breakdown. It also creates capabilities: accessible healthcare, quality education, resilient infrastructure, fair economic institutions, scientific capacity, environmental quality, and meaningful civic participation. Ibn 'Āshūr's wider formulation therefore supports a developmental interpretation in which maqāṣid includes both protection from deprivation and proactive creation of conditions for dignified life.

Contemporary Systems and Public Policy Approaches

Auda (2008) reframes maqāṣid through a systems approach emphasizing wholeness, openness, multidimensionality, interrelated hierarchy, and purposefulness. These features are useful for sustainable development because complex policy problems rarely have linear causes or single-sector solutions. Climate policy affects energy, employment, health, industry, and fiscal policy; digital policy affects education, labor, privacy, markets, and political communication. A maqāṣid approach that is systemic rather than compartmentalized can make these interactions visible.

Abdelgafar (2018) makes the more direct move into policy studies. She distinguishes public policy from traditional jurisprudence and argues that maqāṣid can inform governance, rights, institutional power, ethics, and reform. This distinction is foundational for the present article. A ministry deciding how to allocate a

health budget, regulate artificial intelligence, price carbon, or design social protection is not merely issuing a fiqh ruling. It is making an institutional decision under uncertainty, legal constraints, competing interests, and implementation limits. Maqāṣid must therefore interact with policy analysis rather than substitute for it.

Chapra (2008) similarly applies maqāṣid to development, arguing that wellbeing requires balanced attention to the human self, faith, intellect, posterity, and wealth. His work offers an important bridge between Islamic economics and multidimensional human development. Kamali (2016) extends the discussion to sustainable development through concepts such as maṣlaḥah, balance, moderation, stewardship, and justice. Together, these modern approaches support the transformation of maqāṣid from a purely doctrinal category into a structured language of development and governance.

Sustainable Development as a Public Policy Architecture**From Intergenerational Needs to the 2030 Agenda**

The modern policy concept of sustainable development is often traced to the World Commission on Environment and Development, which defined it as development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], 1987). The definition contains two elements highly relevant to maqāṣid reasoning: priority to essential needs and limits on present action where it harms future capacity. These correspond, respectively, to the hierarchy of necessities and to intergenerational harm prevention.

The 2030 Agenda transformed sustainable development into a comprehensive global policy framework. Its five-part orientation toward people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership explicitly integrates social, economic, environmental, and institutional objectives (UNGA, 2015). The Agenda also insists that the goals are indivisible and interconnected. This feature is important because it resists sectoral

fragmentation: poverty reduction cannot be pursued sustainably through ecological destruction, and economic growth cannot be considered successful if it systematically deepens exclusion or undermines institutions.

The Paris Agreement adds a legally significant climate dimension by establishing a global framework for mitigating temperature rise, adapting to climate impacts, and aligning financial flows with low-emission and climate-resilient development (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], 2015). For maqāṣid-based policy, climate change is a paradigmatic cross-domain problem: it threatens life, wealth, food and water security, family continuity, public order, and the rights of future generations.

Sustainable Development in Muslim Institutional Contexts

Muslim-majority states are not institutionally uniform, and sustainable-development priorities differ by income level, demographic structure, ecological vulnerability, political system, and administrative capacity. Nevertheless, Islamic intergovernmental institutions have explicitly engaged the global development agenda. The OIC-2025 Programme of Action frames development through peace, justice, human dignity, economic cooperation, education, science, poverty alleviation, health, environment, and good governance (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation [OIC], 2016). The Islamic Development Bank has likewise connected its development mission and financing instruments to the SDGs and emphasized country ownership, partnership, inclusion, infrastructure, and sustainable growth (Islamic Development Bank [IsDB], 2018, 2019).

These institutional practices demonstrate that the policy question is no longer whether Islamic development discourse and the SDGs can coexist. They already coexist in strategy documents, development finance, zakat and waqf initiatives, green sukuk, social protection, and national planning. The more demanding question is whether this coexistence is conceptually disciplined and institutionally measurable.

Convergence Without Equivalence

There are strong areas of convergence between maqāṣid and the SDGs: poverty reduction, health, education, decent livelihoods, social inclusion, institutional justice, environmental responsibility, and partnership. Harahap et al. (2023), in a systematic review of Islamic law, Islamic finance, and the SDGs, find substantial overlap and note the importance of government and regulatory support for implementation. Bsoul et al. (2022) show that Islamic ethical resources can support environmental sustainability and responsible conduct toward nature. Recent work on zakat likewise demonstrates how maqāṣid can inform poverty and inequality objectives (Ahyani et al., 2025).

However, convergence should not be treated as identity. The SDGs are outcome-oriented global goals negotiated among states. Maqāṣid is a normative theory of legal purposes with internal hierarchies and methodological constraints. The SDGs do not contain an explicit equivalent of preservation of religion, while classical maqāṣid does not contain a list structurally identical to goals on climate, oceans, or industrial innovation. Contemporary scholars may derive environmental protection through life, progeny, wealth, public interest, balance, and prevention of corruption, and some propose ḥifẓ al-bī'ah as a distinct objective. Yet such expansion should be argued, not assumed (Rois et al., 2024).

The most productive relationship is therefore functional. The SDGs help specify measurable development outcomes; maqāṣid helps justify priority, evaluate trade-offs, and connect policy choices to a broader moral conception of welfare. In this relationship, neither framework is absorbed into the other.

Methodology

The article adopts a combined doctrinal-conceptual and public-policy design methodology. It does not report an experiment, survey, or causal impact evaluation. Its 'results' consist of analytical propositions and a policy framework derived through structured synthesis. This approach is appropriate because the research question concerns how a normative legal

philosophy can be translated into policy-process criteria rather than whether a specific intervention causes a measurable outcome.

A strict temporal boundary was applied: no source published after 31 December 2025 is used. This is particularly important because the research materials assembled for the topic include multiple 2026 publications; those items were screened out. The literature base was organized through a source hierarchy. Tier 1 consisted of primary Islamic sources and foundational juristic texts: the Qur'ān and works of al-Juwaynī, al-Ghazālī, al-Shāṭibī, and Ibn 'Āshūr. Tier 2 consisted of primary or authoritative public-policy instruments and institutional documents, including the WCED report, the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the OIC-2025 Programme of Action, OECD policy-coherence instruments, and IsDB development documents. Tier 3 consisted of peer-reviewed and scholarly secondary literature on maqāṣid, Islamic development, sustainability, public policy, environmental governance, social policy, and Islamic finance.

The primary-source emphasis serves two purposes. First, it avoids circularity: contemporary articles that map maqāṣid to SDGs often cite each other, while the conceptual content of maqāṣid originates in earlier juristic texts. Second, it enables the article to distinguish historical doctrine from modern extensions. For example, environmental protection is strongly supportable through Qur'ānic norms and multiple maqāṣid domains, but the classification of ḥifẓ al-bī'ah as an independent sixth necessity is a contemporary interpretive development rather than a classical consensus.

The analytical coding proceeded in four stages. Stage one extracted recurring normative categories: necessity, need, public interest, harm, justice, dignity, stewardship, balance, and intergenerational responsibility. Stage two mapped these categories to the functional requirements of public policy: problem definition, priority setting, option appraisal, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and review. Stage three compared this structure with sustainable-development governance,

particularly policy coherence, integrated SDG implementation, and long-term/transboundary impact assessment (OECD, 2019; UNGA, 2015). Stage four tested the proposed framework against representative policy domains—social protection, health, education, economic policy, environment, and digital governance—to identify where conflicts and implementation safeguards arise.

The method is interpretive rather than mechanically deductive. A maqāṣid-based judgment cannot be produced by assigning numerical weights to five protected interests without context. Quantification may support decision making, but the framework requires deliberation about evidence quality, severity of harm, distribution, reversibility, legal rights, fiscal feasibility, and institutional capacity. Accordingly, the proposed scorecard is a transparency mechanism, not an algorithm that replaces judgment.

To strengthen research integrity, claims concerning the classical structure of maqāṣid are anchored in primary juristic sources wherever possible, while contemporary policy claims rely on official instruments or verifiable peer-reviewed scholarship. The manuscript also separates normative propositions from empirical claims. Where evidence is illustrative or sector-specific, the text does not generalize it into universal causal conclusions.

Analytical Results and Findings

Finding One: The Distinctive Policy Value of Maqāṣid Is Prioritization, Not Mere Mapping

The first finding is that the greatest policy contribution of maqāṣid is not the ability to create an Islamic version of an SDG table. Its deeper contribution is a logic of priority. Classical maqāṣid differentiates necessities, needs, and enhancements.

Sustainable-development planning similarly requires decisions about what must be protected first when fiscal, administrative, or ecological resources are limited. A maqāṣid approach therefore asks not only which goals are desirable, but which harms are intolerable and which needs are indispensable to basic human and social functioning.

This distinction has practical consequences. During a fiscal crisis, preserving essential health services, food security, water infrastructure, and basic education may take precedence over prestige infrastructure. During a climate emergency, policies that reduce irreversible threats to life and future livelihood may justify greater short-term adjustment costs. The framework does not predetermine every ranking, but it requires policymakers to disclose why one objective is treated as necessary, another as need-based, and another as enhancement.

Finding Two: Maqāṣid Requires Benefit-Harm and Distributional Analysis

The second finding is that maṣlaḥah cannot be treated as aggregate benefit alone. A project can raise national income while displacing vulnerable communities, degrading ecosystems, concentrating wealth, or creating future fiscal liabilities. A maqāṣid analysis must therefore ask who benefits, who bears the burden, whether harms are reversible, and whether less harmful alternatives exist. This aligns closely with contemporary policy coherence, which emphasizes interactions among economic, social, and environmental goals as well as effects 'here and now,' 'elsewhere,' and 'later' (OECD, 2019).

Distributional analysis is especially important. The Qur'ānic concern that wealth should not circulate only among the rich (59:7) and the broader imperative of justice challenge development strategies that measure success solely through aggregate growth. Sustainable policy should therefore incorporate poverty, inequality, access, regional disparities, gendered effects, disability, and intergenerational distribution as part of the appraisal rather than as post-hoc social concerns.

Finding Three: Ecological Integrity Is Cross-Cutting and Cannot Be an Afterthought

The third finding is that ecological sustainability should be built into the core of maqāṣid-based policy. Whether or not ḥifẓ al-bī'ah is classified as an independent maqṣad, environmental degradation clearly threatens life, progeny, wealth, public health, social stability, and future capacity. Qur'ānic norms against corruption on earth and excess, together with the principle of

balance, provide direct ethical support for ecological responsibility (Qur'ān 7:31, 7:56, 30:41, 55:7-9).

Contemporary scholarship reinforces this conclusion. Bsoul et al. (2022) identify strong Islamic ethical foundations for environmental sustainability, while Rois et al. (2024) argue that ecological preservation should constrain development policy when economic projects produce serious environmental conflict. The Paris Agreement and SDGs likewise make climate and ecological effects part of mainstream development governance (UNFCCC, 2015; UNGA, 2015). Thus, an MSPPF appraisal should include ecological thresholds even when a policy is primarily categorized as economic, health, urban, or industrial policy.

Finding Four: Future Generations Need Explicit Representation in Present Policy

The fourth finding concerns intergenerational justice. Sustainable development, by definition, requires regard for future needs (WCED, 1987). Classical preservation of progeny is often interpreted through lineage and family, but Ibn 'Āshūr's broader orientation toward the family system and social order allows a wider policy reading. Future generations should be considered in decisions on debt, climate, biodiversity, infrastructure quality, education systems, and depletion of natural resources.

In practical terms, the framework requires an intergenerational impact statement for high-impact policies. Policymakers should identify benefits and costs beyond the electoral or budget cycle, assess irreversibility, and disclose where present consumption transfers risks to future citizens. This is particularly relevant to fossil-fuel dependency, groundwater depletion, poorly managed public debt, and infrastructure that locks societies into unsustainable patterns.

Finding Five: Operationalization Must Follow the Full Policy Cycle

The fifth finding is that maqāṣid must enter public policy before a decision is finalized and remain present after implementation. Ethical review at the end of the process is too late. The framework should shape problem definition, objectives,

alternatives, budgets, implementation design, monitoring indicators, and revision. This is analogous to environmental impact assessment or rights-based policy screening: the value framework becomes procedural rather than ceremonial.

This finding also addresses the common gap between development strategies and implementation. A policy may have an admirable objective but fail because responsibilities are unclear, budgets are insufficient, frontline institutions lack capacity, incentives are misaligned, or data are unavailable. Maqāṣid is concerned with realized welfare, not only announced intention. Implementation capacity is therefore itself a normative concern because a policy that cannot plausibly deliver its promised essential benefit may divert resources from better alternatives.

Finding Six: Participation and Accountability Are Internal to Maqāṣid-Based Governance

The sixth finding is that participation and accountability should not be treated as optional procedural imports. Public interest cannot be assessed credibly if affected groups are invisible, data are monopolized, conflicts of interest are undisclosed, or reasons are not published. The Qur'ānic themes of justice, trust, consultation, and responsibility support institutional practices in which public power is answerable for its effects.

Participation is particularly important for policies affecting vulnerable communities, religious minorities, women, youth, people with disabilities, workers in transition sectors, and communities facing displacement or environmental exposure. Consultation does not mean that all preferences become binding. It means that decision makers must hear relevant experience, identify overlooked harms, and provide reasons for final choices.

The Maqāṣid-Based Sustainable Public Policy Framework (MSPPF)

The MSPPF translates the preceding findings into an operational architecture. It has four layers: normative anchors, protected-development domains, a policy-cycle process, and an

accountability scorecard. The framework is designed for use by ministries, legislative committees, regulators, local governments, development-finance institutions, and multidisciplinary ethics or Sharī'ah advisory bodies. It can be adapted to national constitutional and administrative contexts.

The framework intentionally distinguishes ends from instruments. Maqāṣid identifies values and policy ends; economics, epidemiology, engineering, education research, environmental science, law, and other disciplines provide evidence about instruments. A claim that a policy serves preservation of life does not establish that the chosen intervention actually saves lives. Empirical evidence remains indispensable.

Layer One: Normative Anchors

Five cross-cutting anchors discipline the framework: justice ('adl), public interest (maṣlaḥah), prevention of harm (daf' al-mafṣadah), dignity and responsible agency, and balance/stewardship (mīzān and khilāfah). These anchors operate across all policy sectors. A policy that produces a benefit but does so through arbitrary discrimination, concealed corruption, severe ecological harm, or denial of due process cannot be justified merely because it advances one maqṣad.

Justice is both distributive and procedural. Public interest requires attention to broad social welfare rather than narrow organized interests. Harm prevention requires analysis of severity, probability, reversibility, and vulnerable exposure. Dignity protects persons from being reduced to policy instruments. Balance and stewardship require attention to ecological and fiscal limits.

Layer Two: Protected-Development Domains

The second layer uses the five classical necessities as foundational domains while allowing explicitly reasoned extensions. Religion/conscience, life, intellect, progeny/family/future generations, and wealth/economic security provide a stable starting structure. Ecological integrity is treated as a cross-cutting protected condition because it

underpins multiple classical objectives. Justice and dignity function as cross-cutting constraints rather than additional sectoral boxes.

This structure avoids two problems. It preserves continuity with the classical tradition while recognizing that contemporary policy problems do not fit neatly inside medieval categories. It also prevents uncontrolled expansion in which every modern value is declared a new maqṣad without methodological justification. New or expanded objectives should be defended through primary sources, inductive reasoning, public welfare, and demonstrable relevance to human flourishing.

Layer Four: The Maqāṣid Policy Appraisal Matrix

Before adoption of a major policy, the responsible body should complete a standardized appraisal. The matrix does not generate a single automatic score; its function is to ensure that decision makers disclose the reasoning that would otherwise remain implicit. Quantitative scoring may be used for comparison, but narrative justification is mandatory for high-risk decisions.

Operationalization requires movement across a policy cycle rather than a one-time ethical screening exercise. Figure 1 presents the MSPPF as a recursive process in which normative purposes, evidence, distributional effects, implementation, monitoring, and accountability continually inform one another.



Figure 1. Maqāṣid-Based Sustainable Public Policy Framework (MSPPF): recursive policy pathway.

Sectoral Applications

Poverty, Social Protection, Zakat, and Fiscal Policy. Poverty policy is a natural area for maqāṣid operationalization because deprivation simultaneously affects life, wealth, family stability, education, and dignity. Yet a maqāṣid framework should move beyond the simple

proposition that charity is good. Public policy must distinguish emergency relief, social insurance, livelihood development, and structural redistribution. Zakat can contribute to poverty reduction, but its effectiveness depends on governance, targeting, transparency, data systems, and coordination with public welfare institutions. Ahyani et al. (2025) show how maqāṣid-based zakat distribution can support poverty and inequality goals while also identifying governance and legal-alignment challenges.

A policy appraisal would therefore ask whether zakat programmes reach eligible groups, whether administrative fragmentation creates duplication, whether cash transfers are adequate, whether livelihood programmes actually raise income, and whether charitable finance substitutes for state obligations inappropriately. Preservation of wealth also requires fiscal sustainability: unsustainable borrowing, regressive taxation, or opaque subsidies may generate short-term benefits while shifting burdens to poorer households or future generations.

Islamic social finance should consequently be treated as one instrument in a wider welfare architecture. Waqf can support health, education, housing, and public amenities; zakat can target specified beneficiary categories; public budgets fund universal or statutory obligations; and private finance may support investment. Maqāṣid provides the evaluative framework for coherence among these instruments rather than a reason to privilege one instrument automatically.

Health, Food, Water, and Human Security

Preservation of life makes health policy a high-priority domain. A maqāṣid analysis begins with preventable mortality and morbidity but extends to social determinants: clean water, nutrition, air quality, sanitation, occupational safety, mental health, and resilient health systems. The hierarchy of necessities implies priority for primary care, maternal-child health, vaccination, essential medicines, epidemic preparedness, and basic water and sanitation before lower-priority prestige expenditure when resources are scarce.

The framework also disciplines emergency policy. During a health crisis, restrictions may protect life while burdening livelihood, education, religious practice, or mental wellbeing. A maqāṣid policy appraisal requires proportionality, time limitation, evidence, alternative measures, and periodic review. Protecting one essential interest does not erase others; rather, the state must minimize collateral harm while addressing the dominant threat.

Education, Knowledge, and Information Integrity

Preservation and development of intellect has become more complex in digital societies. Education policy concerns not only school access but learning quality, scientific capacity, critical thinking, media literacy, research integrity, and equitable digital access. Misinformation, algorithmic manipulation, predatory educational technologies, and generative AI create new threats to epistemic welfare. A maqāṣid approach therefore connects education policy with information governance and technology ethics.

Policy instruments should be assessed by whether they expand real capabilities. Building schools without qualified teachers, devices without connectivity, or universities without research capacity may improve output indicators without achieving the underlying objective. The framework requires outcome measures such as literacy, reasoning, progression, employability, research quality, and digital safety while also protecting academic integrity and ethical responsibility.

Economic Development, Markets, and Sustainable Finance

Preservation of wealth is sometimes interpreted too narrowly as protection of private property or commercial legality. A sustainable-development reading is broader: wealth should be created lawfully, circulated fairly, protected from corruption and predation, and invested in productive capacity. Chapra (2008) warns against reducing development to economic growth detached from family, intellect, faith, and human wellbeing. Kamali (2016) similarly links

sustainable development to moderation, public interest, and moral economy.

Islamic finance can support infrastructure, entrepreneurship, housing, energy transition, and social investment, but Sharī'ah compliance at the contract level does not automatically guarantee maqāṣid performance at the policy level. A formally compliant financing structure may fund environmentally harmful or socially exclusionary activity. Sustainable finance therefore requires project-level impact assessment, transparency, governance, and monitoring. Harahap et al. (2023) find significant potential for Islamic finance in SDG implementation but also emphasize the need for regulator and government support.

The IsDB's development practice illustrates an institutional pathway in which Islamic finance is embedded in broader development strategies rather than treated as an end in itself. Its SDG-oriented materials emphasize inclusion, infrastructure, resilience, partnership, and sustainable growth (IsDB, 2018, 2019). The policy lesson is that financing instruments should be evaluated by developmental outcomes, not only by legal form.

Environment, Climate, and Natural Resources

Environmental policy presents the clearest test of whether maqāṣid can move beyond anthropocentric short-termism. Climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, pollution, and land degradation undermine multiple essential interests simultaneously. The Qur'ānic language of balance, stewardship, anti-corruption, and anti-waste provides a strong normative base, while the Paris Agreement and SDGs provide measurable global policy commitments (UNFCCC, 2015; UNGA, 2015).

Rois et al. (2024) show how *hifẓ al-bī'ah* can be used to examine conflicts between economic development and ecological conservation in government policy. The contribution of a maqāṣid framework is to make environmental damage visible as a welfare and justice issue rather than an externality. A project that creates jobs but contaminates water or destroys irreplaceable ecosystems cannot be judged only by income gains. The appraisal must

include health, displacement, ecosystem services, future livelihoods, and irreversible loss.

This reasoning supports precaution where uncertainty concerns potentially catastrophic or irreversible harm. It also supports 'just transition' policies: workers and communities dependent on high-carbon sectors should not bear disproportionate adjustment costs. Environmental protection and social justice must be designed together.

Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence

By the end of 2025, maqāṣid scholarship had begun to address artificial intelligence and sustainable digital governance more explicitly. Emerging studies propose applying the five necessities to transparency, accountability, public welfare, privacy, safety, and information integrity in AI systems (Wahyunisa & Aminullah, 2025). Such work is preliminary but demonstrates the portability of maqāṣid reasoning into new policy domains.

A public-policy application should avoid abstract declarations that AI must be 'Sharī'ah-compliant' without specifying governance requirements. The MSPPF would ask whether an AI system threatens life or safety, manipulates cognition, compromises privacy or property, discriminates against protected groups, destabilizes family or social relations, or creates environmental costs through energy-intensive infrastructure. It would also ask whether the system produces public benefit, whether less intrusive alternatives exist, whether humans can challenge decisions, and which institution is accountable for harm.

Discussion

From Ethical Vocabulary to Policy Discipline.

The central argument of this article is that maqāṣid becomes policy-relevant when it disciplines choices, not when it merely decorates policy language. The vocabulary of justice, maṣlaḥah, preservation, balance, and stewardship is already common in Islamic development discourse. The challenge is to make that vocabulary costly to ignore. A ministry that claims maqāṣid alignment should be required to

publish how the policy affects essential interests, vulnerable groups, the environment, future generations, and alternative uses of public resources.

This proceduralization is analogous to other established governance tools. Human-rights impact assessments translate legal norms into administrative questions. Environmental assessments make ecological effects part of project approval. Fiscal rules constrain budget choices. A maqāṣid assessment can similarly create a structured obligation to justify policy across moral, social, economic, and ecological dimensions.

Avoiding the One-to-One SDG Mapping Trap.

One-to-one mapping between five maqāṣid and 17 SDGs is attractive because it is simple and visually persuasive. It is also conceptually misleading. SDG 3 on health relates primarily to life but also intellect, progeny, and wealth. SDG 4 on education relates to intellect but also livelihood and social cohesion. SDG 13 on climate affects every essential interest. SDG 16 on institutions concerns justice and governance across all domains. The correct unit of analysis is therefore the policy interaction, not the label.

The MSPPF addresses this by using domains as analytical lenses rather than exclusive categories. Each major policy should be screened across all relevant domains, with explicit explanation of synergies and trade-offs. This approach is closer to both al-Shāṭibī's integrated conception of welfare and contemporary policy-coherence practice (al-Shāṭibī, 1997; OECD, 2019).

Maqāṣid, Rights, and Pluralism

A contemporary policy framework must also address rights and pluralism. The public interest cannot be invoked as a blank cheque for majoritarian preference. Ibn 'Āshūr's emphasis on freedom, equality, order, and rights supports an interpretation in which maqāṣid protects the conditions of dignified social membership (Ibn 'Āshūr, 2006). In constitutional states, these values must operate alongside legal rights, judicial protections, and non-discrimination guarantees.

This is especially relevant to preservation of religion. In a public-policy context, the objective should not be operationalized simply as increasing religious regulation. Policies must distinguish between enabling religious life and coercing conscience. Social peace, freedom of belief, equitable treatment of religious communities, and prevention of hate or persecution are all relevant. A maqāṣid approach gains international credibility when it is able to explain how its norms protect persons and communities rather than merely expand state control.

Policy Coherence and Whole-of-Government Governance

Sustainable development suffers when ministries optimize their own mandates in isolation. An energy ministry may subsidize fossil fuels while an environment ministry finances mitigation; an agriculture ministry may encourage groundwater-intensive crops while a water authority confronts scarcity; an education ministry may expand digital learning while data-protection regulation remains weak. OECD's policy-coherence framework identifies horizontal coordination, vertical coordination, long-term effects, and transboundary effects as central governance challenges (OECD, 2019).

The MSPPF complements this architecture by adding a normative hierarchy. Cross-ministry review should identify not only conflicts among targets but the severity of threatened interests. Cabinet offices, planning commissions, finance ministries, or equivalent coordinating institutions are therefore appropriate locations for a maqāṣid-sustainability review mechanism. A standalone religious affairs ministry would be too narrow for a framework that is fundamentally cross-sectoral.

Risks: Maqāṣid-Washing, Politicization, and Indicator Fetishism

Three risks deserve explicit attention. The first is maqāṣid-washing: using the language of higher objectives to legitimize a policy whose design and effects have not been independently assessed. This risk is greatest where advisory bodies lack access to data or institutional independence. The safeguard is documentation, publication of

reasons, conflict-of-interest rules, and independent evaluation.

The second risk is politicization. Because maqāṣid concepts are normatively powerful and interpretively flexible, governments or interest groups may selectively invoke them. No framework can eliminate political disagreement, but transparency can make selective reasoning contestable. Competing policy options should be appraised using the same criteria, and dissenting expert opinions should be recorded for major decisions.

The third risk is indicator fetishism. A sophisticated-looking scorecard can create false precision. Some impacts are difficult to quantify, and ethical questions cannot be reduced to a single number. The proposed matrix should therefore combine quantitative indicators with narrative reasoning, legal analysis, stakeholder evidence, and independent expert judgment.

Institutional Design for Implementation

A Maqāṣid-Sustainability Policy Unit

Governments wishing to operationalize the framework should avoid creating a purely symbolic committee. A workable model is a small cross-government Maqāṣid-Sustainability Policy Unit located within the central planning, cabinet, or finance architecture. Its function would be methodological rather than clerical: issue appraisal standards, support ministries, coordinate cross-sector review, maintain indicators, and publish annual assessments.

The unit should include public-policy analysts, economists, environmental specialists, social-policy experts, legal scholars, data scientists, and qualified maqāṣid/Sharī'ah scholars. This multidisciplinary composition is essential. A policy question about groundwater, AI, epidemiology, or fiscal risk cannot be resolved by jurisprudential expertise alone, while technical expertise without normative analysis may overlook distributive or ethical consequences.

Role of Sharī'ah and Ethics Councils

Sharī'ah councils, fatwa bodies, councils of Islamic ideology, or ethics committees can contribute to interpretation of primary sources

and the internal logic of maqāṣid. Their role should be integrated but not monopolistic. They should receive complete policy evidence, including fiscal, scientific, rights, and environmental assessments, and should disclose the reasoning supporting their conclusions.

Where disagreement exists among qualified scholars, the public record should distinguish areas of consensus from interpretation. This practice would reduce the tendency to present a single policy preference as the only religiously legitimate option and would encourage a more mature relationship between religious scholarship and administrative governance.

Legislative and Regulatory Integration

Legislatures can require major bills to include a sustainability and maqāṣid impact statement analogous to fiscal notes or regulatory impact assessments. Such a statement should identify affected essential interests, distributional effects, environmental consequences, implementation costs, and review mechanisms. Parliamentary committees can use the framework to question ministers and agencies.

Regulators can integrate maqāṣid criteria into sectoral rulemaking where relevant, particularly finance, health, environment, consumer protection, digital services, and utilities. The key is to translate norms into clear regulatory objectives and measurable compliance requirements rather than issue broad ethical declarations.

Data, Indicators, and Public Reporting

A policy framework is only as credible as its evidence system. Governments should link maqāṣid domains to existing national statistics and SDG indicators rather than create a wholly separate data bureaucracy. Indicators should be disaggregated by gender, age, income, region, disability, and other relevant categories to reveal unequal effects.

An annual Maqāṣid and Sustainable Development Policy Report could summarize progress, trade-offs, unresolved harms, and major policy revisions. The report should not rank society's religiosity. It should assess public

outcomes that can be justified transparently: mortality, learning, poverty, inequality, institutional trust, environmental quality, fiscal resilience, family wellbeing, safety, and access to justice.

Recommendations for Key Stakeholders

National Governments and Central Planning Authorities

- Adopt the MSPPF as a cross-government appraisal standard for major policies, budgets, and development programmes rather than confining maqāṣid review to explicitly religious sectors.
- Require ministries to document necessity, trade-offs, distributional effects, environmental impacts, and future-generation consequences before cabinet approval.
- Create a central coordination mechanism for policy coherence and assign a lead institution with authority to request revisions where sectoral policies conflict with essential objectives.
- Publish annual progress and policy-learning reports using existing SDG and national statistical systems wherever possible.

Legislatures

- Require sustainability/maqāṣid impact statements for high-impact bills and major public expenditure.
- Use committee hearings to test evidence, stakeholder inclusion, fiscal consequences, rights safeguards, and ecological effects.
- Build sunset and mandatory review clauses into policies adopted under conditions of uncertainty or emergency.

Ministries of Finance and Development-Finance Institutions

- Align budget prioritization with essential human needs and long-term resilience instead of treating all development expenditure as equally valuable.
- Require green, social, and Islamic finance instruments to report actual developmental impacts in addition to formal compliance.

- Assess debt sustainability and intergenerational burden as maqāṣid concerns, especially where borrowing finances recurrent consumption rather than productive or protective investment.

Environmental, Climate, and Natural-Resource Agencies

- Integrate ecological thresholds into all major development appraisals and treat irreversible environmental harm as a high-level policy risk.
- Use just-transition instruments to protect workers and vulnerable communities during decarbonization or resource reforms.
- Coordinate water, energy, agriculture, urbanization, and climate policy to prevent one ministry from externalizing harm onto another sector or future generation.

Shari'ah Councils, Religious Scholars, and Ethics Bodies

- Prioritize primary sources and disclose interpretive steps rather than relying on broad claims that a policy serves maqāṣid.
- Engage sectoral experts and empirical evidence before issuing policy-relevant recommendations.
- Differentiate established doctrine, reasonable contemporary extension, and contested policy preference.
- Publish dissenting or minority expert views for major matters where genuine scholarly disagreement exists.

Civil Society and Community Organizations

- Use the appraisal matrix to scrutinize public budgets, infrastructure, social policy, environmental decisions, and service delivery.
- Bring lived experience from marginalized communities into formal consultation and monitoring.
- Develop independent shadow reports on distributional justice, environmental burden, and implementation gaps.

Universities and Researchers

- Empirically test the MSPPF in real policy sectors and compare results across jurisdictions.
- Develop validated indicators for maqāṣid-related policy outcomes without collapsing complex ethical concepts into simplistic indexes.
- Build interdisciplinary research teams combining Islamic legal studies, public policy, economics, environment, health, education, data science, and governance.
- Investigate policy failures and unintended effects, not only successful or normatively attractive cases.

International and Regional Organizations

- Support member states in building policy-coherence, data, evaluation, and ethical-governance capacity.
- Encourage dialogue between SDG institutions and Islamic development organizations on financing, social protection, climate resilience, and governance.
- Promote comparable but context-sensitive indicators rather than a single universal maqāṣid ranking of countries.

Policy Implications and Testable Propositions

The MSPPF generates propositions suitable for future empirical testing. First, policies subjected to structured cross-domain appraisal should display fewer unanticipated conflicts among social, economic, and environmental objectives than policies evaluated within a single ministry. Second, publication of maqāṣid-sustainability impact statements should improve transparency and stakeholder trust when the underlying evidence and trade-offs are disclosed. Third, budget systems that distinguish necessities from enhancements should protect essential services more effectively during fiscal shocks. Fourth, inclusion of intergenerational and ecological tests should reduce policy lock-in and improve long-term resilience. Fifth, multidisciplinary review should produce more operational recommendations than review conducted by

either technical experts or Sharī'ah scholars in isolation.

These propositions are deliberately falsifiable. The value of a maqāṣid public-policy framework should ultimately be assessed by whether it improves reasoning, institutional coordination, equity, and outcomes—not by whether it uses Islamic terminology. Empirical testing is therefore part of faithfulness to maqāṣid, because actual welfare and harm matter.

For public institutions, the most immediate implication is to pilot the framework before attempting system-wide adoption. A limited number of policies in sectors such as social protection, water, health, or climate adaptation could be subjected to parallel conventional and maqāṣid-based appraisal. Comparing the two assessments would reveal whether the framework adds analytically useful information about distribution, vulnerability, intergenerational effects, and public legitimacy rather than merely reproducing existing policy criteria in Islamic terminology.

Indicator design should likewise remain subordinate to substantive judgment. Governments may develop dashboards for selected maqāṣid-related outcomes, but numerical indicators should not be treated as substitutes for deliberation about competing interests, rights, uncertainty, and proportionality. A credible model combines quantitative evidence with transparent reasons, stakeholder participation, independent review, and periodic reassessment as policy effects become clearer.

Limitations and Future Research

This study is conceptual and has four limitations. First, it does not test the MSPPF through a longitudinal policy implementation. Its proposed criteria require validation through case studies, pilot programmes, and comparative evaluation. Second, the article relies on a selective integrative review rather than an exhaustive systematic review across every database and language. The priority given to primary sources and policy design is intentional, but future work should conduct reproducible bibliometric and systematic searches.

Third, maqāṣid scholarship is internally diverse. The classical five necessities are influential but not exhaustive of the tradition, and modern scholars disagree about expansion, hierarchy, universality, and the relationship between maqāṣid and rights. The framework therefore should not be presented as the single Islamic model. Fourth, public-policy institutions vary greatly across Muslim-majority states and minority contexts. A central review unit suitable for one jurisdiction may be inappropriate in another.

Future research should apply the framework to specific policy decisions: subsidy reform, climate adaptation, public-health emergencies, AI regulation, urban planning, zakat administration, education reform, and sustainable finance. Comparative studies could examine whether maqāṣid-based appraisal changes priorities relative to conventional regulatory impact assessment. Researchers should also examine political economy: who has authority to define public interest, how institutional incentives shape interpretation, and whether the framework improves outcomes for marginalized groups.

Conclusion

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah offers a powerful normative vocabulary for sustainable development, but its policy value depends on operational discipline. The classical tradition supplies more than a list of five protected interests. It provides a logic of necessities and needs, public welfare, prevention of harm, social order, and consequential reasoning. Ibn 'Āshūr and contemporary maqāṣid scholarship further open the framework toward freedom, rights, equality, systems thinking, and institutional renewal.

The SDGs, in turn, provide a global architecture of measurable development priorities spanning people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. The relationship between maqāṣid and the SDGs is therefore complementary but not identical. Maqāṣid can help governments justify priorities, manage trade-offs, and connect development with locally meaningful ethical commitments; the SDGs and modern policy

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sciences provide targets, indicators, institutional methods, and comparative evidence.

The proposed Maqāṣid-Based Sustainable Public Policy Framework brings these strengths together through normative anchors, protected-development domains, a seven-stage policy cycle, and a transparent appraisal matrix. Its central principle is that a policy should not be called maqāṣid-oriented because of its label, financing structure, or stated intention. It should earn that description through evidence that it protects essential interests, advances justice, prevents disproportionate harm, respects dignity and rights, preserves ecological capacity, accounts for future generations, and remains open to monitoring and correction.

Operationalization therefore requires institutional humility. Religious scholarship cannot replace technical evidence; technical expertise cannot answer every normative question; and neither should escape public accountability. A credible maqāṣid approach to sustainable development is multidisciplinary, evidence-sensitive, transparent, participatory, and revisable. That combination can turn maqāṣid from an attractive ethical slogan into a substantive contribution to public policy.

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