

# REDEFINING SUSTAINABILITY OF WAQF INSTITUTION: LESSON FROM GREEN WAQF PROJECT

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# **Redefining Sustainability of Waqf Institution: Lesson from Green Waqf Project**

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## **Abstract**

Among the main issues confronting humanity today is the sustainability of the planet. The capitalist system, which focuses on profit making has compromised many aspects of life and needs to be replaced with a better economic system based on an Islamic worldview. Throughout history, the significance of waqf to society can be clearly observed as one of the pivotal instruments in Islamic civilization. However, the contribution of waqf become less significant due to several factors. While previous studies have acknowledged the necessity for waqf revival, current study attempt to explore and redefine the requirement for the sustainability of waqf institution. Today, when there is a call to find solutions for the multidimensional and contemporary issues, Muslims need to go back to their legacy. Proper appreciation of Qur'an and Sunnah along with the works of authoritative ulama is urgently needed. To this end, current study employed Maqasid methodology. A proposed framework which includes seven elements, including the concept, objective, universal law, values, commands, groups, and proofs are provided prior formative theories and principles to achieve sustainability of waqf institutions. In addition, innovative project called Green Waqf is utilized to illustrate how the true concept of waqf can be promoted in the upcoming net zero economy in order to address the contemporary issues. It is expected that the potential of waqf can be fully unlocked with a suitable mechanism, that is based on the Islamic worldview.

## **Keywords**

*Green waqf, maqasid, sustainability, waqf*

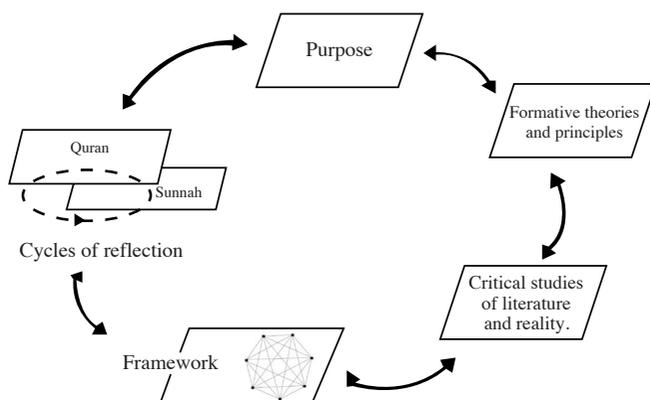
## Introduction

Economic development which focus on profit-making and driven by linear economy paradigm cause negative externalities for society and destruction of the environment (Saraç and Hassan, 2020; Zaman, 2019). The climate change represents proof on problems of pollution, deforestation, ozone depletion, etc., which now call for attention and action of people all over the world to save the planet. The capitalist economic system caused unsustainable development and created social gap which enlarge the inequality between the rich and the poor. In Indonesia for example, the four riches have more wealth than 100 million poorest Indonesian (Lindsey and Mann, 2020).

The dominant debt based financing and financialization phenomena also may bring sustainability issue, especially in economic and financial sector (Ari and Koc, 2018, 2021; CIBAFI, 2022). In addition, the basic public service, i.e. health and education become unaffordable for many people (Ab Rahman and Mahamood, 2015; Listiana et al., 2021). These confronting issues need way out.

On other hand, previous studies have acknowledged the significance of waqf to society throughout history (Bulut and Korkut, 2022; Çizakça, 2000). Within last few years, more research highlighted the huge potential of waqf to address current global issues, such as sustainability of the planet, poverty, climate change, energy insecurity, etc. (Ari and Koc, 2021; Çizakça, 2016; Khan, 2019; Listiana and Mutmainah, 2021; Sadeq, 2002; Saiti et al., 2021; Sukmana, 2020). Theoretically, the waqf assets need to be managed and invested in productive and strategic sectors to produce profits that will be distributed to the *mawqūf 'alayh* (beneficiaries) (Abdullah, 2018; Listiana and Masyita, 2020). The institution of waqf need to be sustainable to enable long lasting benefits. Therefore, the central question is about the sustainability concept of waqf institution, especially how waqf institutions can sustain while there is a need to accommodate the current development and complex realities. To address this important question, Maqasid methodology is employed.

**Figure 1.** Five Steps of the *Maqasid* Methodology



Sources: Auda (2021)

*Maqasid* methodology is an approach that promoting usage of Qur'an and Sunnah as the source of knowledge and reference. The methodology consists of five interconnected steps, including purpose identification, cycle of reflection, framework development, critical studies of literature and reality, and formative theories and principles development. The framework itself has seven elements, including concept, objectives, values, commands, universal laws, groups, and proofs (Auda, 2021). This study represents the pioneer work that attempts to explore and redefine the sustainability concept of waqf institution using the *Maqasid* methodology.

### **Sustainability from Islamic Perspective**

The closest Arabic word of “sustainability” is *istidamah*. This terminology is located in four different places in Qur'an with three variations. In Qur'an Surah (QS) Hud: 107-108 means eternal. In these verses, the context refers to long lasting or unlimited time. In QS Ar-Ra'd: 35 means sustainable. This verse elaborates the condition in paradise which is believed much better than condition in the world. While in QS Al-Ma'arij: 23 means consistent. This verse refers to the praying activity. Having cycles of reflection to these four verses, sustainability refers to long lasting in term of time in which the future condition is ideally getting better. To achieve this condition, substantial and consistent good efforts to maintain the balance are needed.

Among the identified hadith which contains *istidamah* is “The most beloved of deeds to Allah are those that are *adwam* (most sustainable) even if they are small.” *Adwam* represents the superlative type of *daa-im* which means sustainable. According to this hadith, it can be noted that in Islam, consistency of doing good is more important than just the achievement in terms of amount or number. To some extent, there is common concept with the mainstream discourse of sustainability which promoting balance of economy, society, and environment dimensions to enable future generation in fulfilling their own needs (Elkington and Rowlands, 1999; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). It is important to note that from Islamic perspective, the future condition is expected to be better. Islam teaches us to balance our activities and keep the planet in good condition as part of Allah representative/ vicegerent (khalifah) in this earth.

### **Redefining Sustainability of Waqf Institution**

After performing a cycle of reflection toward Qur'an and Hadist along with critical study of existing literature and realities on waqf, as required in applying *Maqasid* methodology, current study proposes a framework for sustainability of the waqf institutions. This section elaborates the seven elements of the proposed framework to achieve the waqf sustainability.

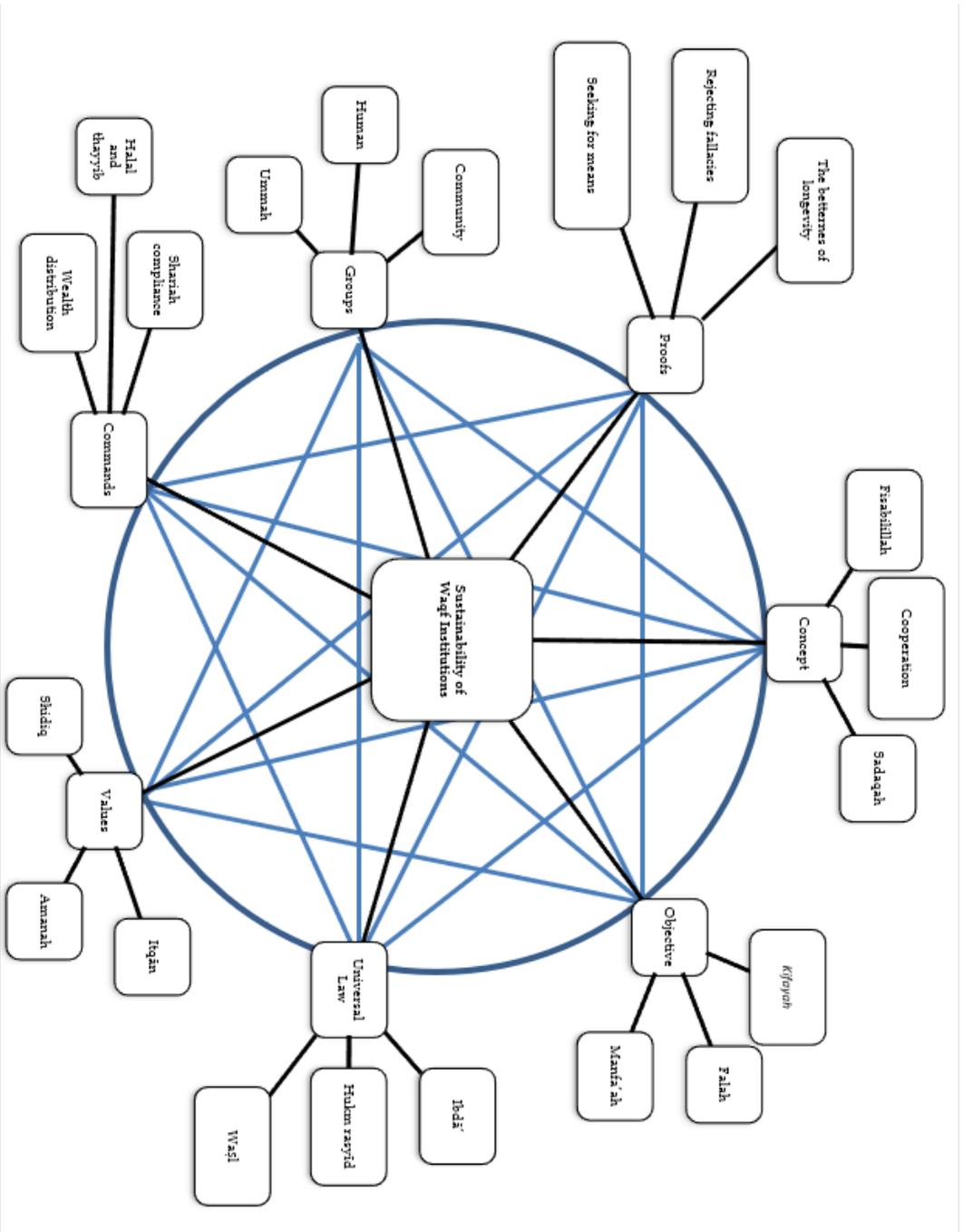
Waqf represents Arabic word *waqfa* which means to hold, confinement, or prohibition, to stop and *standstill*, to obstruct (Al-Shirbīnī, 2015; Çizakça, 1998; Kahf, 1992). Although waqf terminology is not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an, it represents a form of voluntary charity (*sadaqah*) that is recommended in Islam (Abdullah, 2018). Waqf is conceptually represents a form of ibadah to seek good deeds from Allah. Several verses in Qur'an, for example Al Baqarah:195-196, 261-265, 267-276; Ali Imran: 92; An-Nisa: 114; and Yusuf: 88, encourage the believers to spend the wealth in the way of Allah (*fisabilillah*) and do charity. Both man and woman have the similar opportunity to do the *fisabilillah* and charity as they will get rewards from Allah. Every Muslim is being encouraged and has similar opportunity to contribute for waqf according to their own capacity. The usage of waqf benefit may vary, but ideally the benefit can accommodate the beneficiaries to get closer to Allah.

Waqf is a form of good action. According to verse in Al Maidah: 2, Muslim are being encouraged to have cooperate in righteousness and piety, including in waqf context. From economic perspective, the impact can be enlarged and the sustainability can be achieved through cooperation of various stakeholders. *Sadaqah*, cooperation, and *fisabilillah* represent the main concept of waqf. According to its characteristics, both the corpus and benefit of waqf need to be sustainable. The asset itself need to be properly managed to produce sustainable benefit for the *mawqūf 'alayh* (beneficiary). Therefore, essentially, the concept of waqf has alignment with the concept of sustainability.

Waqf institution needs to be sustainable to achieve *falah*, *manfa'ah*, and *kifayah*. *Falah* means success both in worldly affairs and hereafter. Waqf accommodates wāqif to gain good deeds from Allah, enables *mawqūf 'alayh* to gain socio-economic benefit and makes possible the other relevant stakeholders to gain combination of those benefits. *Manfa'ah* (plural: *manāfi'*) of waqf sustainability may bring prosperity for the *mawqūf 'alayh* in term of material and non-material dimension. Historically, many waqf institutions were created with various intentions and functions, including the religious and philanthropic purpose (Abdullah, 2021). From economic perspective, the benefit of waqf may accommodate self and community sufficiency (*kifayah*) to fulfil the basic need, such as food, clothes, water, energy. The *kifayah* of Muslim is important to minimize the dependency to others (Setia, 2015).

To achieve the sustainability of waqf, there are universal law which can be implemented by waqf institution, including *ibdā'* (innovation), *ḥukm rasyīd* (guided good governance), and *waṣl* (connectivity). *Ibdā'* means "to innovate something without any example before" as *Al-Rāziyy* explains [see: *At-Taḥsīr al-Kabīr* vol. IV pp. 24]. To some extent, waqf management has flexibility since waqf is not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an. Therefore, innovation may be implemented considering the *manfa'ah* dimension as long it does not

**Figure 2.** Proposed Framework for Sustainability of Waqf Institution



Source: Authors Own

contradict with shariah. To this end, in managing waqf institutions, *hukm rasyīd* is necessary. Rasyīd as Ibnu 'Āsyūr explains means "to do something based on the truth" [see: At-Taḥrīr wat-Tanwīr vol. XII pp. 156]. In Islam, sources of truth are Qur'an and Sunnah. Therefore, the waqf institutions need to develop the main guidance in managing the waqf based on Qur'an and Sunnah. In practice, waqf institution need to have shariah committee to enable adequate consultancy before making any innovation. The shariah committee may be required in institutional level (i.e., every waqf institution) or/and regional/national scale in form of national committee or authority depending on several considerations. However, it implies the requirement for connectivity between relevant stakeholders in waqf sector.

In promoting sustainability of the waqf, one who has responsibility to manage the waqf assets need to have several values, including *itqān*, *amanah*, and *shidiq*. The meaning of *itqān* as *Al-Munāwiyy* elaborates is "perfectness" and "purity." He brought a story that a person who made a tool from an iron then he decided not to sleep in order to fix what he is making and to give it to his client as perfect as he can do [see: Faiḍul Qadīr vol. II pp. 286]. In waqf context, the *nāẓir* (waqf manager) need to put their best effort in producing best interest for the waqf corpus and benefits flow to *mawqūf 'alayh* (Listiana, 2021). They also need to implement the intention of wāqif to keep the *amanah* while also have honesty (*shiddiq*) according to QS Al-Anbiya': 7 and QS An-Nahl: 43. In order to promote and internalize these kind values to the individual and stakeholders within the waqf ecosystem, moral teaching based on Qur'an and Sunnah is required (Listiana et al., 2020).

Although does not explicitly being mentioned in Qur'an, the institution of waqf need to be managed accordingly with the shariah. The investment shall consider the halal and *thayyib* dimension to enable multiple impacts and avoid the wealth to circulate among the rich. Waqf facilitates the wealth redistribution through its modus operandi. Since an asset is declared as waqf, the benefits will be distributed to the intended *mawqūf 'alayh*, which may include the poor and needy. Throughout history, different group of waqf beneficiaries can be identified. Other than human in general, including Muslim ummah and non-Muslim, community of different animal and plantation have received benefits of waqf. In Islam, the excessive consumption is prohibited and efficient use of resources is encouraged (Saraç and Hassan, 2020). Islamic teaching which encourages people to share and make charity is in contrast with the teaching of mainstream economics which promote rational behavior of homo economicus to be selfish and ignorant (Shaikh et al., 2017; Zaman, 2018). Believers are being encouraged to give the best for charity. The standard may differ among the people. It is not about the amount, but about the sincerity and expecting only for Allah rewards. In addition, several verses in Qur'an indicates that charity does not decrease the wealth.

## Proposed Formative Theories and Principles to Promote Sustainability of Waqf Institution

According to the seven elements of proposed frameworks, basically the consistent efforts to promote sustainability of waqf institution need to be conducted in both individual and institutional level. The concept and objective of waqf (*falah*, *manfa'ah* and *kifayah*) can be achieved if the relevant individual and stakeholder has common values, including *itqān*, *amanah*, and *shidiq* and the institution applies the universal law (*ibdā'*, *ḥukm rasyīd*, and *waṣl*) and command (shariah compliance, *halal* and *thayyib*, wealth distribution). To this end, moral teaching and purification of the heart is very pivotal. Discussion on the purpose of life may be a good start to share awareness regarding priority of life. Zaman (2018) elaborates four principles to achieve spiritual progress, including learning indifference to wealth and luxury, learning moderation in lifestyles, learning generosity and compassion, learning to respect and honour piety alone. Parallel to internalize the values in individual level, the institution which manage waqf need to be managed in professional way by giving the opportunity to the people who have competency and trustworthiness (Listiana et al., 2020). In today context, giving the opportunity to experts is called as meritocracy. In addition, collaboration and partnership are needed to enlarge the impact and sustain the benefits. Waqf institution is a trust-based institutions. Therefore, the good governance needs to be implemented to increase the trust level of society towards waqf institution.

## Green Waqf Project: Concept, Implementation, and Lesson Learned

Green Waqf project (<https://greenwaqf.org/>) which was officially launched in Indonesia on 22 August 2021 aims to propose and spread awareness on the involvement of waqf institution to address the environmental damage. It facilitates activists of waqf, renewable energy, and the environment. The project that was initiated by Mr. Muhaimin Iqbal campaigns to heal and save nature by planting *tamanu/nyamplung* (*Calophyllum Inophyllum*) which the fruits can be further processed to diversified products. Tamanu is chosen among other trees due to its ability to live in barren and dessert areas, while also offering various benefits (Leksono et al., 2014; WaCIDS, 2021). The bio active of tamanu can be ingredients for pharmaceutical industry, cold pressed oil can be used for wellness industry, bio-resin can be utilized for paint, coating, and chemical industry, glycerol for basic industries, and the fatty acid offers alternative for renewable energy.

With those benefits of tamanu, Green Waqf is expected to be among the solutions for environmental recovery and energy independence while also promoting halal industry. Took insight from Qur'an, green trees can be source of clean and renewable energy (QS Yasin: 80 and QS Al Waqiah: 71-72). This project focus on one type of tree (tamanu) to develop the business model and

ecosystem. So far, the seeds were given for free and be planted in cooperated lands, including the waqf land and community areas.

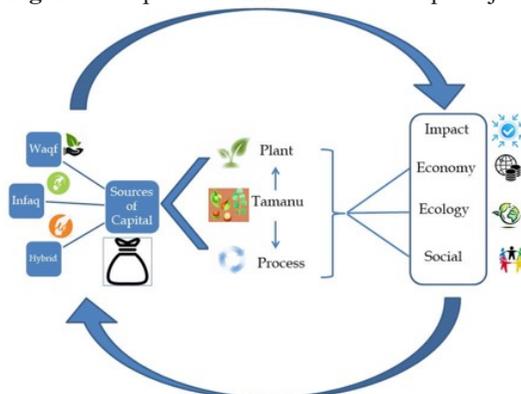
Basically, the ecological, social, and economics benefits of planting and processing tamanu can be gained. The campaign highlights the divine motive in encouraging people to plant and involve in this project as it aims to bring back the sincerity of doing good as teaching in Islamic perspective. Below represents example of hadith which relevant to the Green Waqf campaign and it worked for some Muslim communities in Indonesia.

*Prophet Muhammad SAW The Last Messenger of Allah said: "If a Muslim plant a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charitable gift or sadaqah for him" (Sahih Hadith Bukhari and Muslim)*

*Prophet said: If the Hour (the day of Resurrection) is about to be established and one of you was holding a palm shoot, let him take advantage of even one second before the Hour is established to plant it" (Sahih Hadith Bukhari and Muslim)*

Element of metaphysics which is not covered in the mainstream economics can be promoted through Green Waqf project. This approach is important since the economic man concept which was taught in secular economics class is no longer relevant to promote sustainability of the planet as it does not differentiate between idle desires, wants, and needs (Zaman, 2019). Sustainability can only be gained while people are not ignorant and selfish. Willingness to share and keep the balance and good quality of the planet to the future generations is needed. Green Waqf campaign which call for action to save planet by planting trees (at the moment focus on tamanu) has universal values for individual to change the behavior. This project accommodates the implementation of Islamic teaching by encouraging people to do charity and good deeds. In addition, the ecosystem development facilitates the mechanism of promoting sustainability for the society.

**Figure 3.** Implementation of Green Waqf Project



Source: Authors Own

## **Conclusion**

In Islam, sustainability refers to long lasting in term of time with betterment condition which can be achieved through consistent efforts. To sustain the waqf institutions, parallel approaches in both individual and institutional level are required. In personal level, characters as human being that aware with their society and environment need to be encouraged. This can be done through moral teaching in which for Muslim shall be rooted to the Qur'an and Sunnah. There is necessity to explore how Qur'an and Sunnah guide the believers and human being to pay attention to other people, communities, and environment. Economics benefits is necessary as people need to fulfill their daily needs. However, people shall not compromise ecological and social dimensions just to fulfill their material goals. Green Waqf project which encourage people to do good deeds without make economics benefits as priority, can be an approach to establish and encourage good habits of the individual, thus promoting true concept of waqf. In institutional level, the waqf institution need to be managed in professional way by giving the opportunity for the experts. In addition, collaboration and partnership are needed to enlarge the impact and sustain the benefits.

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