

## Green and Safe Cities (GSC) from Maqasid Shariah: A Proposed Model in Malaysia

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### Abstract

The non-compliance with environmental care ethics has attracted the problems of pollution, natural disasters, malpractice, and crime. The existing Green and Safe Cities (GSC) model is built with the concept of object-based material and secular space that excludes religious elements. Thus, this study aims (i) To identify the issues, problems, and principles of GSC from *maqasid shariah* perspective, and (ii) To suggest a shariah compliant nexus model for GSC. The findings discovered that there is a need to develop a new shariah-compliant GSC model based on a more integrated Religious Framework of the Islamic Built Environment. It is hoped that this new model can solve Malaysia's city issues and problems that in turn produce a healthy and safe community that is parallel with the Shared Prosperity Vision (SPV) 2030.

**Keywords:** Green and Safe Cities (GSC), Maqasid Shariah, Model, Malaysia

### Introduction

The concept of green and safe cities is a balanced urbanization process with the nature through a strategic and integrated planning, a sustainable development in the management of a city built on the concept of object and space-based material (Breuste, 2020; Shen et al., 2018), and a low crime rate to create a safe and comfortable environment in a community. The findings of Brillhante and Klaas (2018) listed four (4) indicators of green cities: (i) Energy efficiency/renewable energy in all sectors, (ii) Greenery: Extensive use in all sectors, (ii) Spatial Planning with land compactness/mix use/social mix, and (iv) Green growth and equity principles. On the other hand, the results of Risdiana and Susanto (2019) suggested five (5) indicators of safe cities: (i) The effect of health availability on a safe city, (ii) The effect of the use of the community's digital device towards a safe city, (iii) The influence of public security on a safe city, (iv) The effect of infrastructure on a safe city, and (v) The influence of people's habits on a safe city.

- Hence, this study aims (i) To identify the issues, problems, and principles of Green and Safe Cities (GSC) from *maqasid shariah* perspective, and (ii) To suggest a shariah-compliant nexus model for GSC.

### Problem Statement

Malaysia produces 38,000 tonnes of environmental waste per day regardless of labour, social and environmental costs which causes 79% of the waste to end up in landfills, while 12% of them is burnt, with only 9% being recycled (Ogiemwonyi et al., 2019). This situation has resulted to an inadequate system to deal with consumer-generated environmental waste in the country, increasing the number of illegal landfills and open burning which affect the natural ecosystem as well as the health of the people. This matter is acknowledged by Yadav et al (2021) who stated that environmental pollution is a spinoff of industries that are not well-managed by humans due to the lack of resources, and rapid modernization of various sectors in the country especially the industrial sector, agriculture, deforestation, and others that have contributed to climate change and natural disasters in Malaysia (Vinathan, 2021). Climate change and natural disasters such as floods have caused the destruction of properties that attracts criminal activities such as theft, burglary and so on to continue the increasingly desperate survival (Ramli, 2021). Furthermore, strong actions by the security authorities must be taken to actions like irresponsible change of land status, and logging by environmental criminals, so that catastrophic floods that hit the country can be dealt effectively for the sake of this country's environmental sustainability and the safety of the people (Bernama, 2022). These environmental issues and problems can be solved with the concept of green and safe urbanization that is environmental and human friendly.

Based on all the elements of green and safe cities mentioned before, it is found that the basis of the GSC model used today is built by setting aside the religious elements. Therefore, a new shariah-compliant model for GSC is proposed so that the existing model can be improved within a comprehensive Islamic framework in accordance with human nature to address pollution, natural disasters, malpractice, and crime due to non-compliance with the existing environmental ethics.

### Principles of *Maqasid Shariah* for the Well-Being of Ummah

The principles of *maqasid shariah* refer to the goals or objectives of the Islamic Law that is existed and developed in line with the revelation of Allah SWT in the Qur'an and Sunnah through the required value system to produce a balanced and fair society that is referred to as "ummat wasatan" (Sarkawi et al., 2017). According to Imam al-Syatibi, *maqasid shariah* aims for the welfare (welfare, benefits and uses) of universal human beings as well as protecting them from beneficial effects and social problems (Nofialdi, 2017) through five (5) main basic principles (*Dharuriyyat*) namely maintaining religion, life, intellect, ancestry, and property (Ahmad et al., 2021; Abdurrahman, 2020), followed by complement (*Hajiyyat*) as benefits which seek to remove severity and hardships that do not pose a threat to the very survival of the normal order, while also improving the quality of life. Then, the third level of the *maqasid* involves luxuries (*Tahsiniyyat*), that is the beautifying purposes that represent desirability which pursues the achievement of refinement and perfection in the customs and conducts of people at levels of achievements (Shabbir, 2020; Santoso et al., 2021). Alias et al (2018) found that *maqasid shariah* has been recognized as the backbone of law in the Syafie sect and it is used in the method of determining *syarak* law which is then used in the Fatwa Committee Muzakarah Decision of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia for issues arising in our country (Mustapha et al., 2019). It is in line with the most dominant Syafie sect in the Southeast Asian region (Ikhsan, 2018) including Malaysia, that is also used

in dealings between Muslims and non-Muslims in this country to create a peaceful and united society (Gunardi et al., 2020; Gunardi, 2019; Zahalan et al., 2019).

In addition, the principle of *maqasid shariah* is applied in the development of the Malaysian Shariah Index as a benchmark for Islamic-based state administration in 2015 covering eight areas of administration namely law, politics, economy, education, health, culture, environmental, and social infrastructure (Abidin et al., 2016), followed by the development of the *Manhaj Rabbani* Policy through the measurement of i-MaqSD as the current Islamic administrative policy in our country (Al-Bakri, 2021). Thus, it is concluded that the application of *maqasid shariah* is widely used in various fields and the development of Islamic policy which is the core of Malaysian Islamic country governance, that is mostly followed by regional Islamic countries and today's world.

### Islamic Built Environment (IBE) for Green and Safe Cities

Efforts to sustain the environment have led to the fulfillment of the goals of Islamic law itself which will ultimately bring "Maslahah" and reject any harm from humans through the application of five (5) principles of Islamic *maqasid shariah* directly related to the environment (Meerangani, 2018). According to Hashim and Abdullah (2020), the framework of environmental sustainability according to Islam includes human relationship with Allah SWT through revelation and human responsibility as a caliph which requires four (4) main moral values such as justice, excellence, social capital, and limit of mischief to achieve sustainability for the planet, people, and profit (Figure 1).

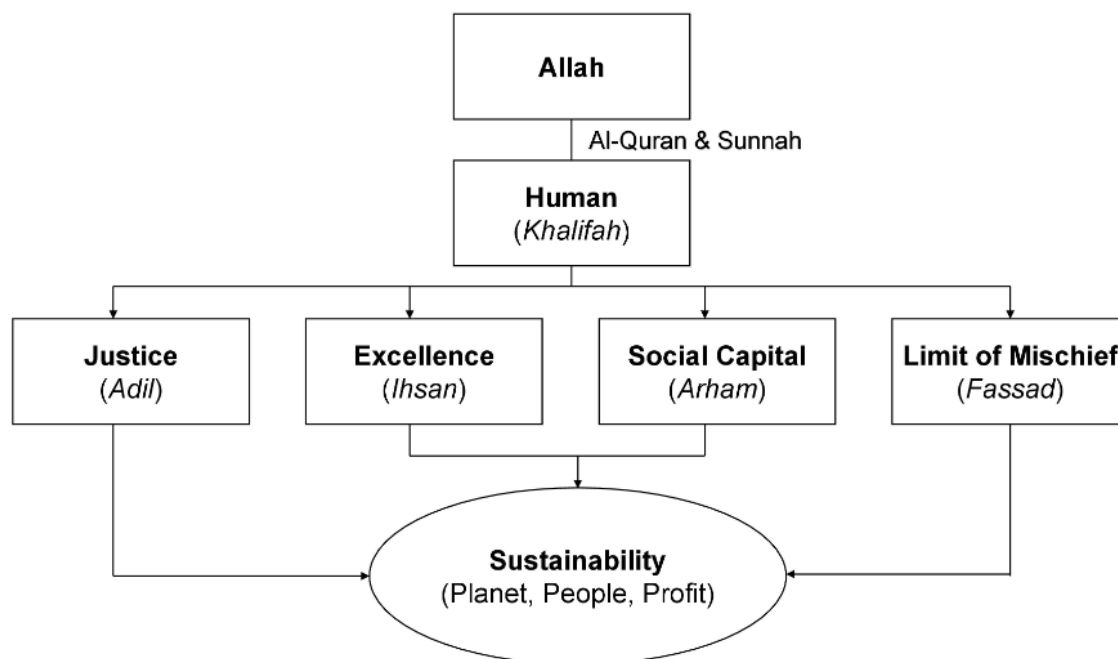


Figure 1: Sustainability Framework from an Islamic Perspective (Hashim & Abdullah, 2020)

It is very much in line with the total planning and development philosophy represented by Goh (2016) based on three (3) main relationships: (i) Relationship between Man and His Creator, (ii) Relationship between Man and Man, and (iii) Relationship between Man and His Environment (Figure 2).

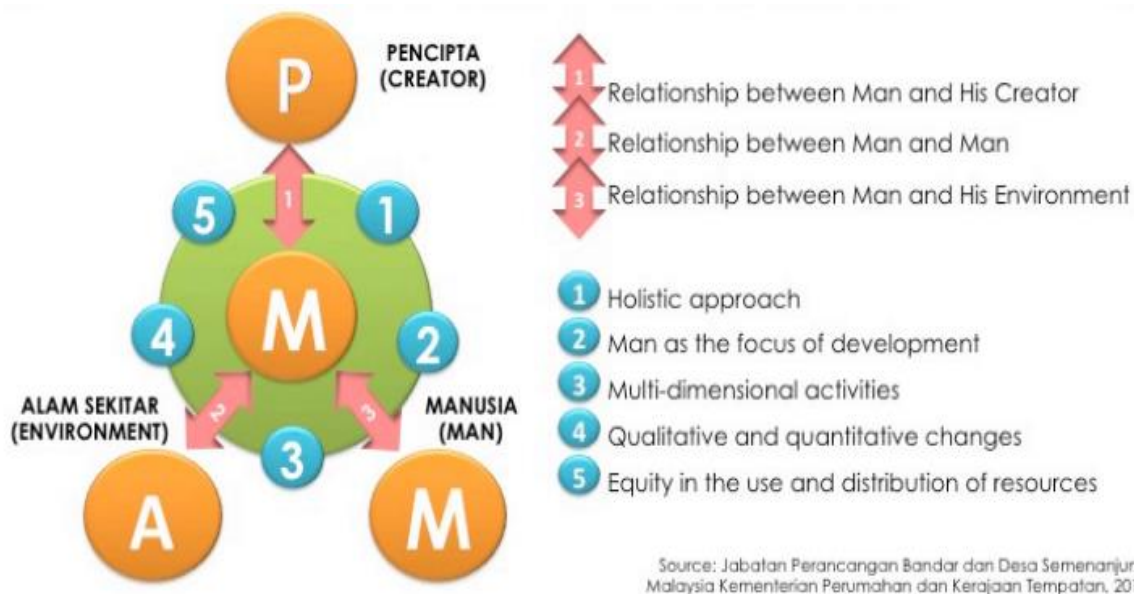


Figure 2: Total Planning Doctrine (Goh, 2016)

This is also supported by Hassan et al (2019a) who stated that the consciousness and sustainable behavior of a human being is significant with spirituality that is fundamental in religion. According to Hassan et al (2019b), there are three (3) main strategies that can be used to apply Islamic elements in green technology development: (i) Practicing Islamic financing, (ii) Practicing Islamic management, and (iii) Implementing Islamic ethical guidelines in accordance to the Religious Framework of the Islamic Built Environment presented by (Sarkawi and Abdullah, 2015). The essence of “Maslahah” to mankind is embodied in the philosophy of *maqasid shariah* which binds the *maqasid* with the built environment area of knowledge. People in the profession are religiously destined to render their duty towards prospering the world. They must be able to grasp the following ideas to ensure a better application of *maqasid shariah* in the built environment:

- i. Built environment profession as a caliph
- ii. Built environment’s work as an *ibadah* (worshipping of Allah)
- iii. Al-Qur’an and al-Sunnah as a source of decision-making
- iv. Interconnectedness between *din* (religion) and Madinah (city) as a basis of place-making and livability.
- v. Belief in reward and punishment in the Day of Judgement for every undertaking.

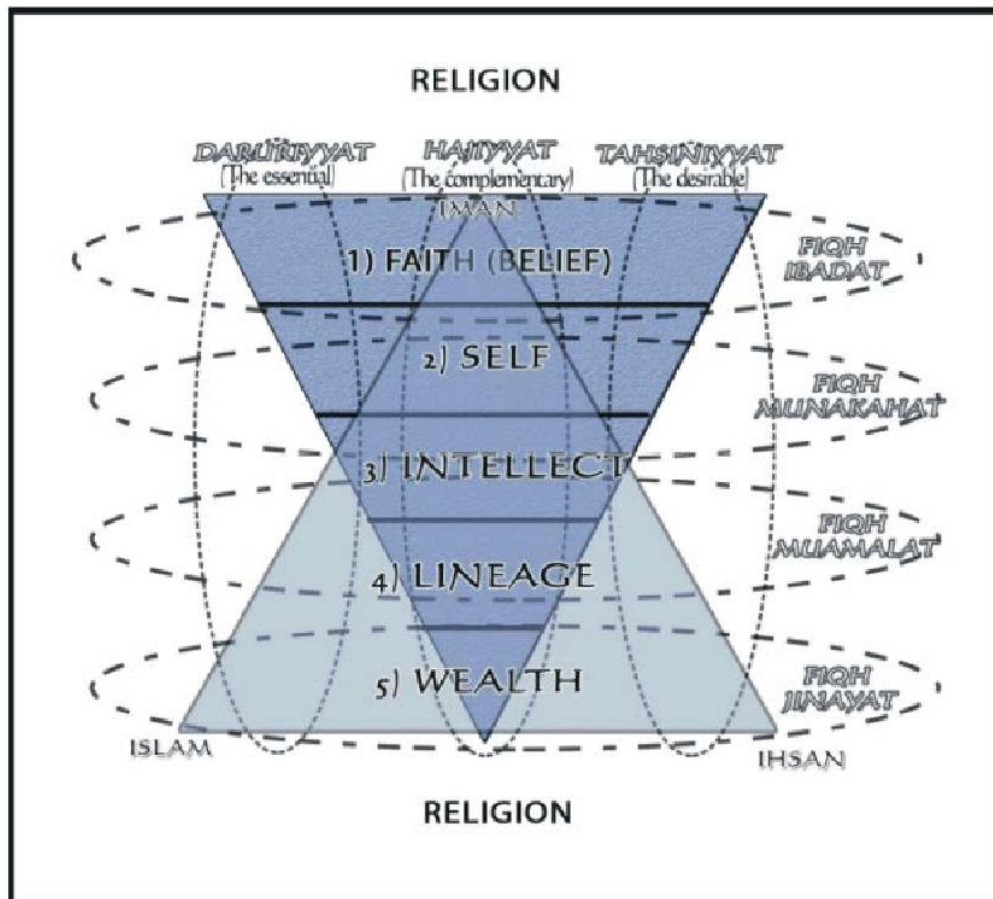


Figure 3: A Religious Framework of the Islamic Built Environment (Sarkawi & Abdullah, 2015)

In a nutshell, the above five points help to conceptually synchronise the built environment and the *maqasid shariah*. The case of public facilities provided within the realm of the planning sector testify the real needs to fulfil the five essentials of *maqasid shariah*, thus enlightening the former synchronisation. From this study, the policy makers should be able to relate the aspect of the built environment with the elements of *maqasid shariah*. This will help create an environment that is in line with the Qur'an and Sunnah. Further studies on policy implementation by integrating both built environment and *maqasid shariah* need to be emphasized even more. Within this context, the main findings of this study will contribute to the current body of knowledge in practising the normal standard of the built environment by incorporating Islamic elements within the ambit of *maqasid shariah*, that help produce better caliphs on earth.



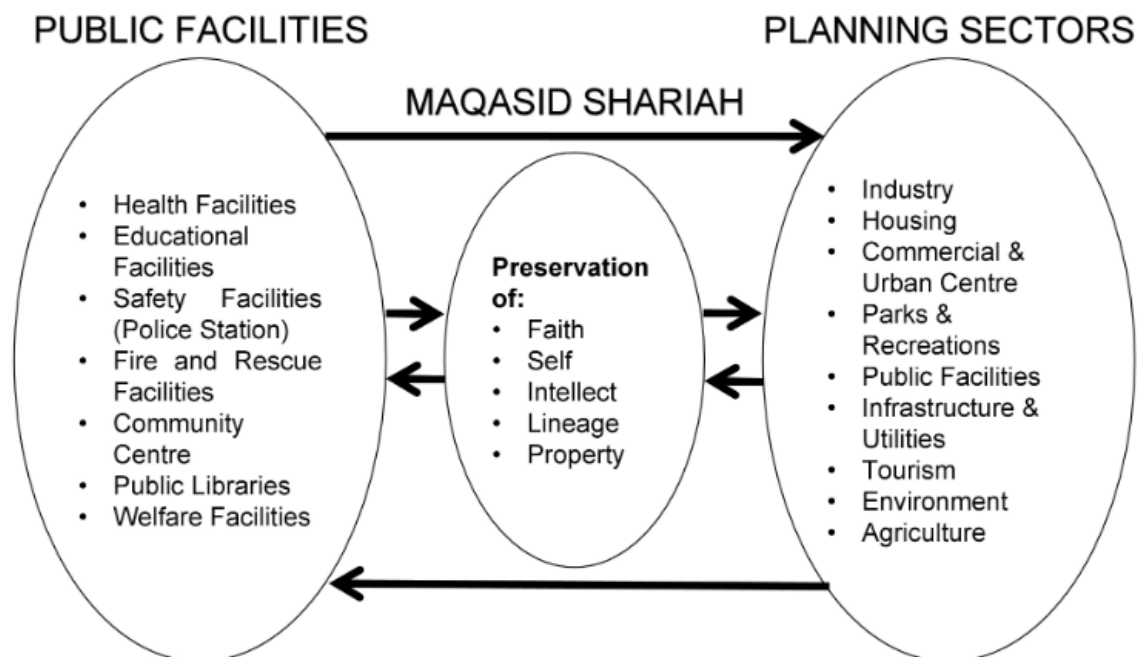


Figure 4: The relationship between Public Facilities, *Maqasid Shariah*, and The Planning Sectors (Sarkawi et al., 2017)

The words of Allah SWT which means: “And when it is said to them: Do not make mischief and mischief on earth, they replied: Surely, we are the ones who do only good. Find out! That indeed they are the ones who actually make mischief and destruction, but they do not realize it” (Al-Baqarah, 11-12). Based on the meaning of Allah SWT's words above, the preservation of the environment is very much demanded in Islam which is entrusted to human beings as caliphs on this earth.

Furthermore, it is in line with the Shared Prosperity Vision (SPV) 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 12th Malaysia Plan (RMKe12) and Manhaj Rabbani Policy (MRP) through the government's commitment to provide an impartial standard of living to all Malaysians, to create a safe social environment, and to develop a generation with intellects, ethics, integrity, and those who are emotionally, spiritually, and physically stable.

The words of the Prophet SAW which means: "The world is green and beautiful, and God has appointed you as its manager. He sees what you do" (HR Muslim). Based on the meaning of the hadith, a man has been appointed as the caliph of Allah SWT who is responsible for administering and managing nature at its best and He is the evaluator of our every action in the world. Consequently, the effort to prosper the earth is very much demanded in Islam so that the human generation remains safe and contented through the ages.

### Relevance to Government Policy

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The proposed model corresponds with the 18th Sustainable Development Goal which is Societal Harmony & Happiness which gives emphasis and focus to develop green and safe cities based on the principles of *maqasid shariah* in Islam. It agrees with the status of Malaysia as an Islamic country that is respected by the world and

is an example for regional Islamic countries to follow in order to produce a peaceful and secure country in the diversity of religions, races, and ethnicities.

The Shared Prosperity Vision (SPV) 2030: This vision is a government social agenda aimed at providing a decent standard of living for all Malaysians by 2030. The proposed model coincides with the 5th and 6th Strategic Thrusts of Shared Prosperity Vision (SPV) 2030 namely Social Wellbeing and Regional Inclusion to increase the Malaysian Well-Being Index (IKRM) and Crime Prevention Index in the country. It can be achieved through KEGA 12, the Green Economy which is a global trend that includes green city activities, smart and sustainable cities, as well as the preservation and conservation of the environment for the well-being of future generations.

The Twelfth Malaysia Plan (RMKe-12): It is a fundamental setting to realize the spirit of the Malaysian Family that will change the course of national development for the next five years (2021-2025) to achieve a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable Malaysia. It is based on three themes: (i) regenerating the economy, (ii) strengthening security, well-being, and inclusiveness, as well as (iii) boosting sustainability. Thus, it is concluded that the proposed model in this study is very much in line with the goals and themes of the Twelfth Malaysia Plan, especially Theme 2 (Strengthening security, well-being, and inclusivity) and Theme 3 (Boosting sustainability) as a catalyst for the first half of the Vision of Common Prosperity (WKB) 2030.

*Manhaj Rabbani* Policy (MRP): MRP is a current government policy based on Islam implemented through the I-MaqSD initiative which works by applying the principles of *maqasid shariah* directly with the values of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, the development of the proposed model is in line with this policy to create sustainable green and safe cities based on Islam.

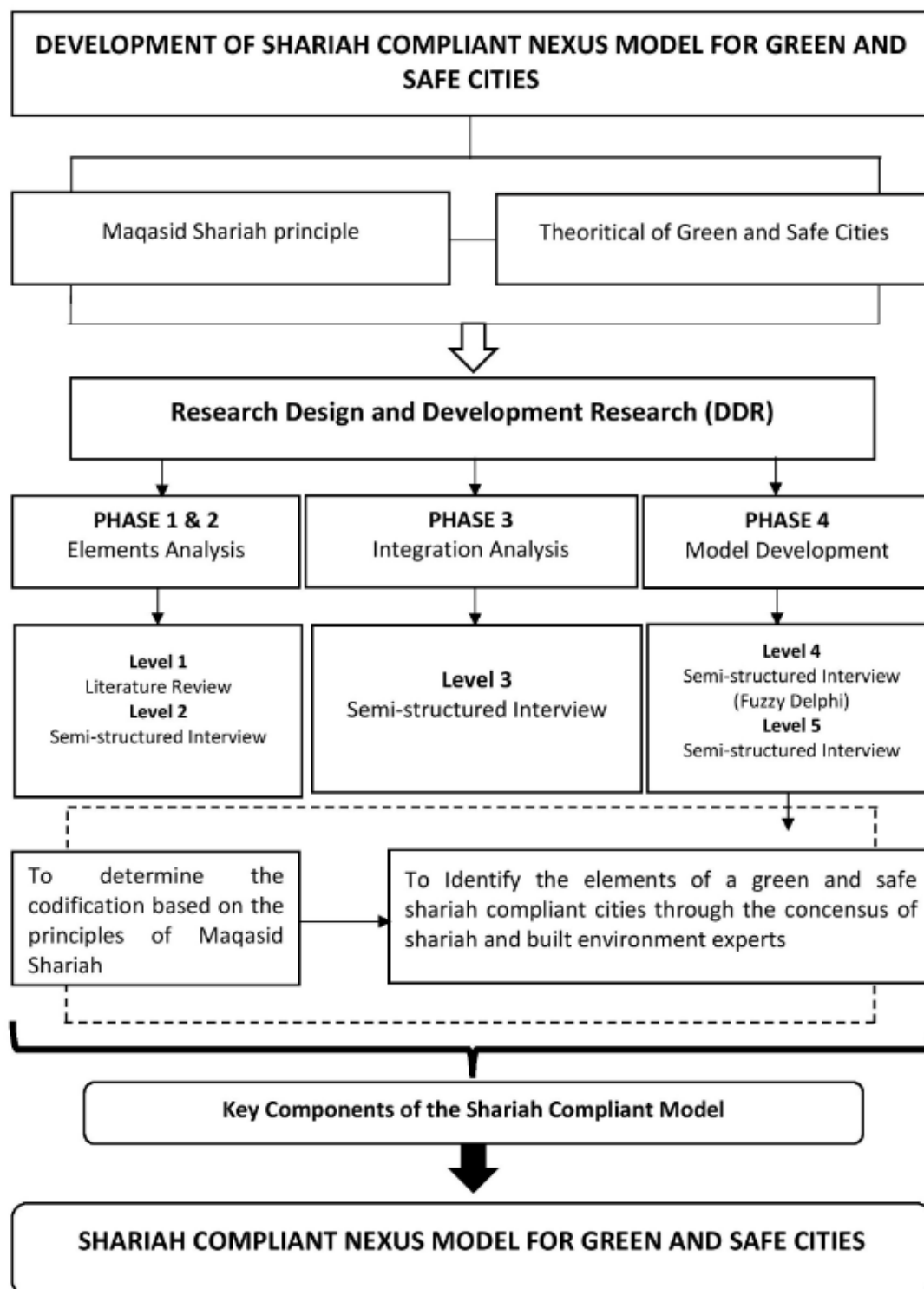


Figure 4: Proposed Development of Shariah Compliant Nexus Model for Green and Safe Cities

### Conclusion

There are three (3) main strategies that can be used to apply Islamic elements in green and safe cities development: (i) Practicing Islamic financing, (ii) Practicing Islamic management, and (iii) Implementing Islamic ethical guidelines in accordance to the Religious Framework of the Islamic Built Environment to develop the previously suggested model. Therefore, this model will be used as a reference and guide for the Local Authorities in Malaysia, in line with



the goals of SPV 2030 through KEGA 12, RMKe-12, SDGs (Community Harmony & Happiness) and *Manhaj Rabbani* Policy to create a sustainable, safe, prosperous, and dignified society in a comprehensive Islamic framework.

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