

## Spiritual and Environmental Harmony: The "Green" Movement of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia from a Sufi Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the "Green" movement initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI) from the perspective of Sufism—an Islamic spiritual approach that emphasizes harmony between humans, nature, and God. The background of this research lies in the escalating environmental crisis and the need for a spiritual approach to build ecological awareness among Muslims. The objective of this study is to analyze how Sufi values are implemented in the Green Movement of Kemenag RI, focusing on the Green Waqf program and environmental education in madrasahs. The benefit of this research is to offer both theoretical insight into ecosufism and practical guidance for policymakers and religious practitioners on integrating spiritual values into environmental conservation programs. The method employed is a literature review and thematic analysis of Kemenag documents, Sufi literature, and related studies. The findings reveal that Sufi values such as *zuhud* (asceticism), *shukr* (gratitude), and *tafakkur* (deep reflection) serve as the main motivations for environmental preservation, implemented through the Green Waqf program, tree planting, and environmental education in madrasahs and pesantrens. This movement not only enhances the ecological consciousness of the Muslim community but also reinforces the harmonious relationship between humans, nature, and God, which lies at the heart of Sufi teachings. The study recommends strengthening the integration of Sufi values into religious-based environmental policies and education to support sustainability and mitigate the environmental crisis in Indonesia.

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### 1. Introduction

Environmental conservation has become a pressing global issue, including in Indonesia, where environmental degradation and climate change pose serious threats to human life and all living beings. In this context, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI) has taken a strategic role by initiating various programs that integrate religious values with environmental conservation efforts. One of the key initiatives is the "Green" movement, aimed at mobilizing Muslims and religious institutions to actively care for and protect nature as a moral and

spiritual responsibility. This movement emphasizes not only the physical aspect of environmental preservation but also the deeper spiritual dimension, particularly through the approach of Sufism—a deeply rooted and influential religious tradition in Indonesia (Efendi, 2025; Fauzzia et al., 2018).

Through programs such as Green Waqf (forest endowment), the Ministry of Religious Affairs reaffirms its commitment to integrating eco-theological values into religious policies and activities. Green Waqf is a concrete step that combines the concept of *waqf* with forest conservation as a symbol of life and a tool to sustain the Earth. Forest *waqf* not only provides essential oxygen for all living beings but also represents a tangible form of Muslim responsibility to preserve the blessings of nature. This idea aligns with Surah Al-Qashash [30], which states that a blessed place is one that has trees. The program is part of Kemenag's Asta Prioritas (Eight Priority Programs), which promotes collaboration among government, waqf institutions, and Muslim communities concerned with climate change and environmental issues (Saputra, 2025).

From the perspective of Sufism, humans as *khalifah* are entrusted with maintaining the balance of nature and must not cause harm. Core Sufi principles such as *zuhud* (simplicity), *shukr* (gratitude), and *tafakkur* (deep contemplation) serve as the foundation for Islamic environmental ethics, encouraging Muslims to live in harmony with nature. This spiritual awareness shifts the paradigm of environmental conservation from merely a social obligation to an act of worship that is morally and religiously binding (Imamah, 2017). Therefore, the Green Movement of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which adopts Sufi values, can serve as a model for harmonizing spirituality and ecology in a way that is culturally and religiously relevant to Indonesia (Haq et al., 2024).

The implementation of this movement is also evident in various activities within pesantrens and Islamic educational institutions, such as tree planting and sustainable environmental management. For instance, IAIN Metro supports the movement by planting one million matoa trees as part of creating a sustainable green campus. This activity is not only a symbolic act of greening but also a concrete commitment to internalize environmental conservation values in the daily lives of Muslims. This approach demonstrates that the Green movement is not merely normative but also practical and adaptable by various levels of society (Humas IAIN Parepare, 2025).

Given this background, the study titled "Spiritual and Environmental Harmony: The 'Green' Movement of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia from a Sufi Perspective" becomes highly relevant and important. This research not only explores how Sufi values can strengthen religiously based environmental movements, but also how such movements can serve as spiritual and practical solutions to the increasingly complex environmental crisis. Therefore, this study is guided by the following research questions: *first*, How does the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Green Movement reflect and implement Sufi ecological values? *Second*, What are the challenges and opportunities in integrating Sufi spirituality into environmental conservation programs within Indonesian Muslim society?

Given this background, the study titled "Spiritual and Environmental Harmony: The 'Green' Movement of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia from a Sufi Perspective" becomes highly relevant and important. This research not only explores how Sufi values can strengthen religiously based environmental movements, but also how such movements can serve as spiritual and practical solutions to the increasingly complex environmental crisis. The study aims to understand and examine how the "Green" movement initiated by Kemenag RI can be viewed and implemented through the lens of Sufism.

The study seeks to explain the concept of ecosufism as a spiritual foundation for environmental conservation movements, emphasizing the harmony between God, humanity, and nature as the essence of Sufi teachings. It also aims to identify the implementation and challenges faced by the Green Movement in the cultural and spiritual context of Indonesian Muslim society, particularly the role of pesantrens and Sufi communities in supporting the movement. Ultimately, this research aims to offer strategic recommendations for the development of a Sufism-based green Islamic movement that can more effectively build spiritual and environmental harmony in Indonesia.

The benefits of this research are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it enriches the body of knowledge on the relationship between Sufism and ecology, particularly the concept of ecosufism which integrates spiritual and ecological awareness as an inseparable whole. Academically, the study contributes to religious and environmental studies by highlighting Sufism as a source of ethics and motivation for environmental preservation in Islam. Practically, the research serves as a reference for the Ministry of Religious Affairs and religious institutions in designing and developing environmental conservation programs grounded in spiritual and Sufi values, so that the green movement can resonate more deeply with the inner life and behavior of the Muslim community.

This study also assists pesantrens, Sufi communities, and Islamic environmental activists in internalizing and implementing ecosufism values in their daily activities, making environmental preservation an integral part of religious and social practices. Moreover, it encourages collective awareness among Muslims to fulfill their role as khalifah with full responsibility through a harmonious relationship between spirituality and the environment—ultimately contributing to mitigating the environmental crisis and climate change in Indonesia. Its social benefit lies in strengthening the synergy between religion and environmentalism in building a sustainable and harmonious society, as well as affirming the role of religion as a driver of positive social change in facing global challenges.

## 2. Research Method

The appropriate research method to examine the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia's (Kemenag RI) "Green" Movement from the perspectives of Sufism and Islamic environmental ethics is a qualitative approach employing library research combined with thematic analysis. This method allows the researcher to deeply explore spiritual concepts, Sufi values, and the implementation of the Green Islam movement through the study of literature, Kemenag policy documents, and academic works on Islamic environmental ethics.

*First*, data collection is conducted by gathering relevant written sources, including classical Sufi texts, the Qur'an alongside its various tafsir (interpretations), hadith, scholarly journals, Kemenag policy reports, and research articles that discuss the relationships among Sufism, environmental ethics, and nature conservation movements. *Second*, thematic coding is applied to the collected tafsir texts and other relevant literature by systematically identifying and marking passages that contain references to environmental ethics, spiritual values, and fundamental Sufi principles related to nature. This process involves extracting key concepts such as ecosufism, zuhud (asceticism), shukr (gratitude), and tafakkur (deep contemplation).

*Third*, an interpretive comparison of the coded themes is conducted across multiple sources. This involves cross-examining different tafsir texts, hadith collections, and Sufi literature to assess the consistency and relevance of these spiritual and ethical values within the context of the Green Movement initiated by Kemenag. *Fourth*, the findings from thematic coding and interpretive analysis are synthesized to construct a cohesive narrative that illuminates how Sufi values underpin and inform environmental programs such as Green Waqf and tree planting initiatives at madrasahs.

Additionally, thematic analysis is applied to examine related Qur'anic verses and hadiths concerning environmental ethics by using a similar approach often employed in Islamic environmental ethics research grounded in prophetic teachings. This helps reveal how Islamic teachings provide moral and spiritual foundations for Kemenag's green initiatives. Therefore, this research method goes beyond textual analysis alone by also exploring how these values are applied and reflected in social and policy contexts.

This explicit, step-by-step analytical process ensures transparency and rigor, clarifying how tafsir texts and other literature are systematically analyzed through thematic coding, concept extraction, interpretive comparison, and synthesis to understand the intersection of Sufism and environmental ethics in the Kemenag Green Movement.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1 Indonesia's Forest Monitoring and Deforestation Trends in 2025: Progress and Challenges

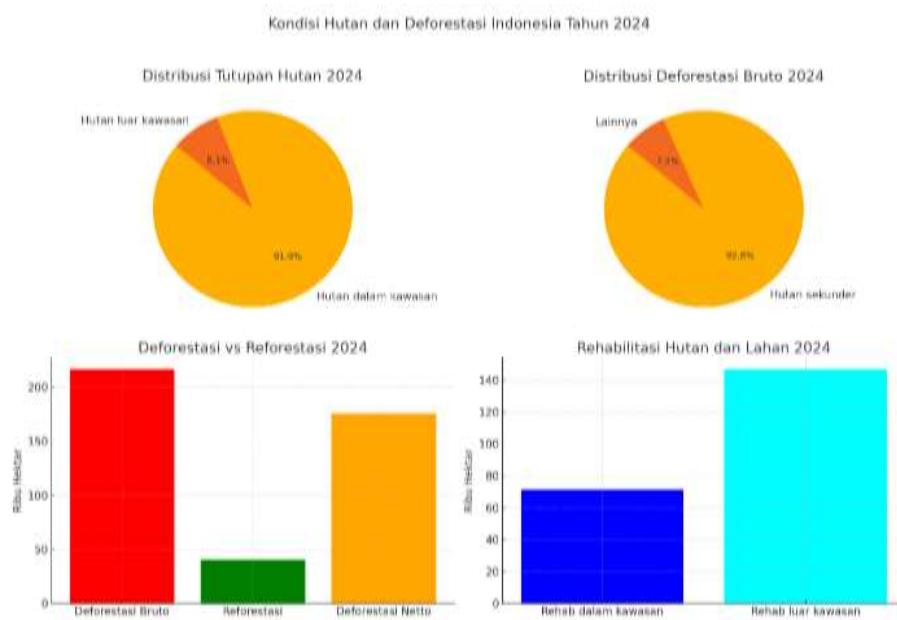


Figure 1. Forest Conditions and Deforestation in 2024

Source: Forest Insights

In 2025, the Ministry of Forestry released the annual monitoring results regarding forest conditions and deforestation rates in Indonesia. This monitoring was conducted comprehensively across the entire land area of Indonesia, covering 187 million hectares both inside and outside forest areas, using Landsat satellite imagery provided by the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN). The monitoring results showed that the forested land area in Indonesia in 2024 reached 95.5 million hectares, or 51.1% of the total land area. Of this number, approximately 91.9% (87.8 million hectares) is located within forest areas (Dangio, 2025).

Meanwhile, the net deforestation figure for 2024 was recorded at 175.4 thousand hectares. This number is obtained from gross deforestation of 216.2 thousand hectares minus reforestation results reaching 40.8 thousand hectares. The majority of gross deforestation occurred in secondary forests, covering 200.6 thousand hectares (92.8%), with 69.3% occurring within forest areas and the rest outside forest areas (Saragih, 2025).

To reduce deforestation, KLHK implemented reforestation efforts through the Forest and Land Rehabilitation (RHL) program, covering 217.9 thousand hectares in 2024—71.3 thousand hectares within forests and 146.6 thousand hectares outside forests. This program is funded through both the state budget (APBN) and non-state sources. Over the past decade, the average RHL has been around 230 thousand hectares annually, serving as a benchmark for reducing deforestation. These efforts contribute to increased forest cover, agroforestry lands, and secondary forest regeneration (Dangio, 2025).



Figure 2. 10 Environmental Problems in Indonesia

Compared to previous years, the deforestation trend shows a slight increase but remains below the decade average, indicating that government policies and strategic efforts to protect forests have begun to yield positive results. Key strategies include fire control, enforcement of the Presidential Instruction on moratoriums for new licenses and improved governance of primary forests and peatlands, peatland and climate damage control, restrictions on forest area conversions for non-forestry uses, sustainable forest and social forestry management, forest rehabilitation, and forestry law enforcement. These efforts are also in line with the Indonesia FOLU Net Sink 2030 program, which aims to reduce carbon emissions from the forestry and other land use sectors and achieve a balance between carbon emissions and absorption by 2030.

The effort to maintain a healthy and sustainable environment continues to face various obstacles, both at the national and global levels. The impacts of the ecological crisis due to environmental degradation are increasingly being felt, such as prolonged dry seasons, droughts, floods, and storms. Mukri Friatna, Deputy for External Affairs of the WALHI National Executive, stated that the government has not yet shown seriousness in environmental protection. This is reflected in policies such as Government Regulation No. 42 of 2021, which regulates ease for National Strategic Projects (PSN). This regulation opens the door for these projects to disregard environmental considerations through special ministerial authority, which then results in environmental damage and the criminalization of communities opposing the projects (Zulfah, 2025).

Mukri also identified four state policies that risk worsening environmental conditions in 2025: *First*, The food estate program, aimed at strengthening food security, which based on past experiences (such as during President SBY's administration), actually caused agrarian conflicts, peatland damage, and displacement of Indigenous communities. The government targets the clearing of 2 million hectares of land in Papua and 770 thousand hectares in Central Kalimantan. This program also drives deforestation and environmental damage, worsened by the expansion of oil palm, mining, and other extractive sectors.

*Second*, Pollution caused by mining activities in coastal areas has become another environmental crisis. Mukri highlighted that such activities threaten around 35 thousand fishing families and have caused mine waste to contaminate 3,197 coastal villages. Smelter operations that produce toxic waste further worsen the condition. A total of 55 small islands have been designated as locations for mineral and coal mining, causing marine ecosystem damage and impacting the lives of Indigenous peoples. This crisis is predicted to continue growing, triggering air, river, and coastal pollution (Thea, 2025).

*Third*, Agrarian conflict has become a serious issue. WALHI data shows that throughout 2023, there were 346 cases of agrarian conflict involving around 638 thousand hectares of land and 135 thousand families. This number is expected to keep increasing in 2025 with the enforcement of policies such as the Omnibus Law on Job Creation, which facilitates land-use conversion for investment purposes.

*Fourth*, The phenomenon of criminalization of citizens and environmental crimes is on the rise. Mukri criticized Article 162 of Law No. 3 of 2020 (a revision of Law No. 4 of 2009) on Mineral and Coal Mining, which is often used to target people who oppose mining. Examples include: The police summons of 12 fishermen in Bangka Belitung for rejecting a sand suction vessel owned by PT Timah, The criminalization of three residents of Alasbuluh Village in Banyuwangi for rejecting a class C mining operation, In Wawonii, Southeast Sulawesi, three residents were summoned for opposing nickel mining activities by PT Gema Kreasi Perdana. Even activists such as WALHI Bengkulu Director Abdullah Ibrahim Ritonga have been criminalized after accompanying the people of Pasar Seluma Village in rejecting iron sand mining by PT FLBA (Iryanti, 2025).

Based on this data, the environmental crisis in Indonesia in 2025 is becoming more evident and alarming, marked by increasingly frequent ecological disasters and massive ecosystem degradation caused by unsustainable development and natural resource exploitation. In WALHI's Environmental Outlook 2025 report titled "Continuing to Stray, or Returning to the Right Path," deforestation is estimated to reach 600,000 hectares, primarily due to land clearing for PSN projects such as food estates, oil palm plantations, and mining, which often ignore principles of sustainability and social justice. The exploitation of small islands for mining has also narrowed the living space of coastal communities and damaged marine ecosystems (Iryanti, 2025).

In addition, pollution from industrial and domestic waste—including hazardous waste from smelters—continues to contaminate rivers and seas, affecting both human health and biodiversity. Agrarian conflicts involving Indigenous peoples and local farmers are also on the rise, further exacerbating social injustice and environmental destruction.

In facing this complex environmental crisis, technical solutions and policy measures alone are not sufficient. A more holistic approach is needed—one that not only relies on regulations and sanctions, but also builds deep spiritual awareness and environmental ethics among the public. This spiritual approach is crucial because the environmental crisis is not merely a physical problem, but also a crisis of values and of the human-nature relationship. Recognizing that nature is a creation of God that must be respected and protected serves as a strong moral foundation for transforming human behavior to be more environmentally responsible (Irawan & Widjajanti, 2021; Khikamuddin et al., 2024).

Within Islamic spirituality, particularly through Sufism (*Tasawuf*), there is a profound framework emphasizing harmony between God, humans, and nature. Sufism teaches that nature manifests God's presence and should be honored as part of worship and humanity's trust (*amanah*) as Earth's stewards (*khalifah*). Core Sufi values such as *zuhud* (simplicity), *shukr* (gratitude), and *tafakkur* (deep reflection) encourage living harmoniously with nature, avoiding overconsumption, and contemplating God's greatness in creation. This spiritual approach fosters both external ecological awareness and internal transformation motivating concrete environmental action (Kusnadi et al., 2023; Rohidayah, 2018).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI) recognizes the importance of this spiritual dimension in tackling the environmental crisis and has launched the Green Movement of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This movement integrates religious values—especially from Sufism—into environmental conservation efforts. Concrete implementations include the Green Waqf program, which endows forest lands for preservation, the planting of one million matoa trees in pesantrens (Islamic boarding schools) and madrasahs, and eco-theological education programs aimed at nurturing eco-consciousness grounded in holistic sustainable faith. Moreover, Kemenag conducts training for religious leaders and ulama to strengthen their roles as environmental advocates within their communities.

These initiatives demonstrate how religion can be a catalyst for positive social change, fostering spiritual-environmental harmony urgently needed amid Indonesia's ecological challenges. Thus, the Green Movement goes beyond symbolism to become practical action grounded in spiritual values, serving as a relevant and effective response to the nation's environmental problems.

### **3.2 Green Waqf 1 Million Trees Program by the Ministry of Religious Affairs as a Response to the Environmental Crisis**

The Green Waqf Program and the One Million Matoa Trees Planting Movement by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI) represent a tangible commitment by the government to integrate religious values with environmental conservation. This program strengthens the role of Muslims as stewards of nature while promoting a moderate and sustainable green civilization in Indonesia. Kemenag continues to demonstrate its dedication to environmental preservation by empowering the potential of religious communities and institutions through the Green Waqf program (Irawan, 2025).

A clear example of this commitment was seen in the event titled "*Ecotheology in Action: Green Waqf Movement for Sustainable Forest Conservation*", held in Jakarta on April 22, 2025. This event was a collaboration between Kemenag, the Indonesian Waqf Board (BWI), and MOSAIC (Muslims for Shared Action on Climate Impact). These three institutions joined forces to integrate Islamic spiritual values with concrete environmental action (Akbar, 2025).

Minister of Religious Affairs, Nasaruddin Umar, explained that *Green Waqf* is a direct implementation of the ecotheology concept, which is part of the Asta Program Priorities of Kemenag. He stated that forest waqf serves as both a symbol of life and an instrument for environmental conservation. He cited *Surah Al-Qashash* verse 30, which mentions that a blessed place is one with trees—signifying the vital role of trees in providing oxygen for all living beings. To encourage public participation, a forest waqf feature is now available in the *Satu Wakaf Indonesia* application, making it easy for the public to contribute. He emphasized that the greater the community's involvement, the more significant the positive impact that can be achieved.

Kamaruddin Amin, Chairman of BWI, highlighted that the potential of national cash waqf reaches around USD 12 billion per year. He referred to this figure as a major social force, considering the charitable nature of Indonesian society. According to him, this potential should be directed toward tangible actions such as developing waqf forests. This vision materialized in the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Kemenag, BWI, and MOSAIC as a joint commitment to build and manage national waqf forest areas (Antara, 2025).

Nur Hasan Murtiaji, Chairman of MOSAIC, revealed that studies on forest waqf had begun since 2023. He believes forest waqf can become a key instrument in sustainable development if supported by cross-institutional collaboration. Throughout 2025, Kemenag, BWI, and MOSAIC conducted roadshows in four cities—Wajo, Gunungkidul, Tasikmalaya, and Padang—to promote the concept. They also held focus group discussions with *nazhir* (waqf managers) to design a national roadmap for forest waqf development. These efforts resulted in the formation of the Indonesian Waqf Forest Forum and a joint commitment to expand the coverage of forest waqf throughout the country. As part of its educational and awareness efforts, the Ministry of Religious Affairs also launched a campaign themed "*Kemenag Go Green: Green Theology to Address Environmental Challenges*".

This program included public seminars and special workshops aimed at educating communities on the importance of waqf as a solution to environmental sustainability. Director General of Islamic Guidance, Abu Rokhmad, stated that the concept of waqf is not only about worship, but also contributes significantly to public welfare and environmental conservation. He added that Islam teaches the responsibility to protect the Earth as a trust from God, and waqf is one of the effective means to fulfill that mission (Arifai, 2025).

The series of events also included a thematic workshop titled "*Nazhir by Hutan Wakaf Bogor: Replicating the Waqf Forest Model*" for selected participants, and a public lecture themed "*Planting Roots in Paradise: From the People for the Future*." These events took place in four cities: Wajo on March 6, Gunungkidul on March 9, Tasikmalaya on March 11, and Padang on March 14, 2025. According to Abu Rokhmad, these initiatives align with government programs that promote waqf as a solution not only for economic challenges but also ecological ones. He expressed hope that more people would take part in the green waqf movement—whether as donors (*wakif*), managers (*nazhir*), or beneficiaries (Pendis Kemenag, 2025).

Support for the movement also came from Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University (UIN Malang), which pledged its participation in the one million matoa tree planting campaign in commemoration of Earth Day 2025. Rector of UIN Malang, Prof. Dr. H.M. Zainuddin, MA, stated that his campus is ready to be a pioneer in implementing ecotheology in higher education. He explained that planting trees is not just a physical act, but also a means to cultivate spirituality in the relationship between humans and nature. The matoa fruit, native to Papua, was chosen as a symbol of Indonesia's biodiversity and holds deep philosophical meaning. This activity is expected to be not just a reforestation effort, but also a reminder of the importance of maintaining harmony among humans, nature, and God (Humas IAIN Parepare, 2025).

In his call to all levels of society, Prof. Zainuddin emphasized the importance of caring for and nurturing the trees of life that have been planted. He stated that this movement should become a collective legacy for future generations. "*Let us plant, nurture, and care for these trees as an expression of our love for the Earth. From us, for the Earth*," he said enthusiastically. With a spirit of collaboration and growing spirituality, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and its partners hope that Green Waqf will become a strong foundation for a green and sustainable future for Indonesia (Humas IAIN Parepare, 2025)..

The Green Waqf Program and the One Million Matoa Tree Planting Movement initiated by Kemenag RI are strategic initiatives aimed at environmental preservation based on religious and ecotheological values. Green Waqf is a forest waqf program initiated by Kemenag in collaboration with BWI and MOSAIC as part of Kemenag's Asta Program Priorities. Forest waqf serves as a symbol of life and a tool for environmental protection, providing oxygen essential for living beings. This program also utilizes digital technology by offering a forest waqf feature in the *Satu Wakaf Indonesia* app to facilitate broader public participation. Since early 2025, Kemenag, BWI, and MOSAIC have conducted roadshows and discussions with *nazhir* across various regions to develop a national roadmap for forest waqf and establish the Indonesian Waqf Forest Forum to expand the program nationwide.

Meanwhile, the One Million Matoa Trees Planting Movement was officially launched on the 55th Earth Day, April 22, 2025, at the Indonesia International Islamic University (UIII) in Depok. The initiative involves distributing one million matoa tree seedlings to 34 provinces to be planted in strategic locations such as places of worship, madrasahs, pesantrens, and religious campuses. The matoa tree was selected due to its strong ecological, economic, and symbolic value in supporting climate change mitigation. This movement is also part of Indonesia's green diplomacy and involves cross-sector collaboration from local governments to religious civil society organizations. At the same event, the groundbreaking ceremony was held for the construction of the Indonesia International Istiqlal Boarding School, which integrates Islamic education with science and global issues, including environmental conservation based on ecotheology (Lebak, 2025).

This movement is not merely ceremonial, but part of a long-term transformation in education and environmental stewardship. Kemenag affirms that environmental conservation is a national agenda requiring the involvement of all sectors, including religious ones. Through the ecotheological approach, Kemenag aims to restore the role of humans as guardians of nature, rather than its exploiters. The movement also calls on religious communities to see environmental preservation as a moral and spiritual responsibility, in accordance with the Islamic concept of *khilafah*. Matoa tree planting activities have been carried out simultaneously in various provinces with an initial target of 170,000 trees, which will continue to increase until the one million tree target is achieved (Humas IAIN Parepare, 2025).

From a Sufistic perspective, the spiritual values in Sufism—such as the awareness of the unity between humans and nature and the moral responsibility as *khalifah*—are highly relevant in driving this program. Sufism emphasizes simplicity, love, and harmony with nature, which deepens ecological awareness and inspires real action in environmental conservation. In the context of Green Waqf, this Sufistic dimension strengthens the spiritual foundation of forest endowment, making environmental preservation not only an economic or social effort but also an act of worship and spiritual devotion, reflecting the holistic practice of Islamic values.

By integrating Sufi spirituality and ecotheology, the Green Waqf 1 Million Trees program offers not only practical solutions to the environmental crisis but also fosters ecological consciousness rooted in Islamic spirituality. This enhances the role of the Muslim community in maintaining earth's sustainability as a combined religious and social responsibility.

### 3.3 Implementation of Green Islam by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MoRA RI) has strategically implemented the Green Islam movement to integrate religious values with environmental conservation. As part of its Asta Program Prioritas (Protas), specifically within ecotheology, this initiative seeks to raise ecological awareness grounded in Islamic teachings and actively engage Muslim communities in environmental stewardship.

A flagship example is the Green Waqf program, a partnership between MoRA, the Indonesian Waqf Board (BWI), and MOSAIC (Muslims for Shared Action on Climate Impact). This forest endowment initiative expands the traditional concept of waqf beyond social and economic functions to include ecological preservation. Forest waqf symbolizes life support—providing oxygen and sustaining ecosystems—mirroring Islamic values that emphasize protecting blessed lands, such as articulated in Surah Al-Qashash [28:30]. To widen public participation, a forest waqf feature is accessible via the Satu Wakaf Indonesia app, facilitating easier contributions. The potential national waqf cash flow of approximately USD 12 billion annually represents a significant untapped social capital for environmental action (Humas IAIN Parepare, 2025).

Since early 2025, MoRA, BWI, and MOSAIC have conducted roadshows in various regions such as Wajo, Gunungkidul, Tasikmalaya, and Padang to garner support and develop a national roadmap for forest waqf expansion. Focus group discussions with *nazhir* (waqf managers) have resulted in the formation of the Indonesian Forest Waqf Forum and commitments to expand forest waqf coverage nationwide. This collaboration demonstrates readiness and synergy among religious institutions and Muslim communities in developing a waqf-based environmental movement.

MoRA's One Million Matoa Trees Planting Movement, launched on Earth Day 2025, exemplifies practical application of Green Islam values. Thousands of madrasahs—both public and private—participated, with the main event held at the Indonesian International Islamic University (UIII) in Cimanggis, Depok. The choice of matoa trees harmonizes economic benefits with environmental impact, given their carbon absorption capacity and climate mitigation role (Saputra, 2025). This mass mobilization translates Sufi values like *zuhud* (simplicity) and *shukr* (gratitude) into tangible ecological action, although sustaining long-term care for planted trees and scaling beyond institutional settings requires ongoing support (Saputra, 2025).

Madrasahs function as critical hubs for instilling these spiritual-environmental values. For instance, MAN 4 Jakarta's participation through the Adiwiyata program involved planting 10 matoa trees using compost derived from organic waste processed on campus, integrating ecological education with religious praxis (MAN 4 Jakarta, 2025). Similarly, MTsN 2 Tanah Datar champions the "Green Madrasah, Sustainable Earth" movement, viewing tree planting as both nature conservation and future generational investment. While these examples illustrate effective internalization of ecological ethics, related challenges pertain to resource constraints and ensuring program continuity amid academic priorities (MAN 4 Jakarta, 2025).

Beyond tree planting, MoRA emphasizes embedding ecotheological education within madrasahs and pesantrens, making environmental stewardship both a moral obligation and spiritual worship. Religious educational curricula are beginning to incorporate environmental modules, yet curriculum standardization and teacher preparedness in environmental theology remain areas for development to maximize impact. MoRA also promotes cross-sector collaboration, including with the Ministry of Forestry, to provide tree seedlings and support integrated environmental management. The Circular Letter of the Secretary-General of MoRA No. 182 of 2025 instructs all MoRA work units, from central to sub-district level, to actively participate in tree-planting efforts and environmental conservation. This approach strengthens synergy between government, religious institutions, and society in addressing climate change and environmental degradation.

The implementation of Green Islam by MoRA reflects a strong commitment to integrating religious values with tangible environmental actions. The Green Waqf program and the One Million Matoa Trees Movement are concrete examples of how ecotheological concepts are translated into policies and practices involving various segments of society. This approach not only raises ecological awareness but also reinforces the role of religion as a driver of sustainable social change.

**Table 1. Case Study of Implementation**

| Program/Regulation           | Description   | Location             | Impact/Findings  |
|------------------------------|---|----------------------|--|
| Green Waqf                   | Land/forest endowment for forest conservation, digital platform 'Satu Wakaf Indonesia'  | National             | Over 1,000 hectares of land conserved, broad participation |
| One Million Tree Planting    | National movement to plant matoa trees in madrasahs and pesantrens  | All across Indonesia | Improved ecological literacy among students                |
| Green KUA                    | Transformation of KUA (Religious Affairs Offices) into environmentally friendly offices   | 160+ KUA offices     | Energy and water efficiency                                |
| Eco-Masjid                   | Mosque program as centers for ecological education, waste management training, and greening initiatives                         | 25+ districts        | Waste reduction, increased green open spaces (RTH)         |
| Religious Training Counselor | Workshops on eco-dawah and eco-theology for religious counselors, integration of environmental material into religious guidance | Regional/National    | Expanded outreach and socialization                        |

Source: [kemenag.go.id](http://kemenag.go.id)

By emphasizing Islamic spiritual and ethical values, MoRA aims to build harmony between humans, nature, and God, in accordance with Islamic teachings that position humans as *khalifah* (stewards) responsible for caring for the Earth. The implementation of Green Islam is expected to become a model for other religious institutions and Muslim communities in Indonesia to further develop holistic and sustainable environmental movements, while contributing concretely to climate change mitigation and national ecosystem restoration.

The Green Movement by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MoRA RI) is a strategic initiative that integrates religious values with environmental preservation, with a strong foundation in the perspective of *tasawwuf* or Sufism. This movement not only aims to increase ecological awareness among Muslims but also to implement spiritual values that emphasize harmony among humans, nature, and God—an essential teaching of Sufism.

The implementation of Sufi values in the Green MoRA movement is evident in tree planting and environmental management based on the principles of *zuhud* (simplicity), *shukr* (gratitude), and *tafakkur* (deep reflection). These values encourage Muslims to live in harmony with nature and to view environmental conservation as both worship and a moral duty. For instance, the One Million Matoa Trees campaign conducted simultaneously across MoRA's offices and madrasahs is a clear expression of Sufi values in ecological action. Matoa trees were chosen not only for their economic value but also for their ability to absorb carbon and support climate change mitigation. This activity involved thousands of public and private madrasahs that serve as engines of environmental awareness among students (Khoeron, n.d.).

MoRA has also developed the Green KUA concept—environmentally friendly Offices of Religious Affairs—featuring sustainable designs with green spaces, efficient water management, and the use of renewable energy such as solar panels. This program supports the Istiqlal Declaration and global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the areas of environment and clean energy. Religious counselors and KUA officers also play active roles in conveying environmental messages to the public, integrating Sufi values into religious outreach and guidance (Sya'bani, 2025).

The Green Islam movement championed by MoRA also emphasizes environmental endowments as tools of sustainability. In addition to forest waqf, there are well-endowment and zakat-based agricultural projects that have been implemented in various regions, including interfaith projects in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). These initiatives demonstrate that Islamic environmental preservation is not merely ritualistic but also practical and inclusive, involving diverse communities in protecting the Earth as a trust bestowed upon humankind (MTs Negeri 2 Mataram, 2025).

From a spiritual perspective, the Green Islam movement embraces Sufi principles such as *zuhud*, *shukr*, and *tafakkur* to cultivate a holistic human-nature-God relationship. These values call for simplicity, gratitude for natural blessings, and contemplative reflection on creation's signs. While program designs echo these values well, an observable tension lies in translating the ascetic ideal (*zuhud*) into modern educational and social contexts marked by consumerism and rapid development pressures. Finding effective pedagogical approaches that balance these tensions remains critical.

Furthermore, the movement's ambitious goals require deeper integration of these spiritual ethics into policy-making and community engagement frameworks to enhance sustainability and social justice outcomes. There is opportunity for MoRA to develop systematic monitoring and impact assessment tools to identify gaps, improve program coherence, and capture lessons learned—a step that would strengthen the connection between theological ideals and environmental praxis.

In sum, MoRA's Green Islam movement presents a promising model that concretizes ecotheological concepts through forest waqf, large-scale tree planting, environmental education, and sustainable institutional practices. It advances the role of religion as a transformative agent for environmental stewardship rooted in Sufi spirituality. Continued reflection on implementation challenges and more rigorous evaluation will be essential to amplify public engagement and policy effectiveness, ensuring this holistic approach delivers substantial contributions to Indonesia's environmental resilience.

### 3.4 Integration of Sufi Values in Kemenag's Green Movement

In recent years, environmental issues have become increasingly urgent worldwide, including in Indonesia. Ecological crises—such as climate change, deforestation, water and air pollution, and biodiversity loss—are no longer distant threats but realities unfolding now. In response, environmental strategies alone are no longer sufficient; spiritual and moral approaches are also needed (Sugiarti & Riyanto, 2024; Suwito, 2011). In this context, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the

Republic of Indonesia (Kemenag RI) has taken a strategic step by launching the “Green Kemenag” (Green Ministry of Religious Affairs) program. This movement aims to promote behavioral and cultural change within religious institutions, educational organizations, and wider society to preserve the environment as a responsibility rooted in faith and national identity.

The Green Kemenag movement should be understood not merely as a bureaucratic policy but as a reflection of Islamic spirituality, particularly from a Sufi perspective. Sufism emphasizes inner purification, closeness to God, and a way of life characterized by simplicity, tranquility, and love—values closely aligned with environmental sustainability. From a Sufi viewpoint, nature is not a resource to exploit but a manifestation of divine majesty. Therefore, protecting and caring for the environment is both a form of worship and spiritual piety (Khikamuddin et al., 2024; Kusnadi et al., 2023; Rohidayah, 2018).

However, in practice, the application of *zuhud* in educational programs and community life appears to be more symbolic than comprehensive. While campaigns on waste reduction and energy saving are present, the deeper challenge lies in transforming consumerist habits pervasive among students and staff. The institutional structures and curricula have yet to fully inculcate *zuhud* as a lived ethic beyond episodic environmental activities (Anieg, 2024). The ascetic element of *zuhud*, which could critically challenge consumerist lifestyles and deepen individual environmental commitment, is not always clearly embedded or operationalized in large-scale programs. The spiritual depth often remains internal to pesantren and less explicitly integrated into broader policy designs.

Kemenag translates these values to a broader public Green Movement, such as Green Waqf or tree planting campaigns, the sufistic dimension is often implicit rather than explicit. This hints at a tension between spiritual ideals and pragmatic policy execution: while Kemenag promotes Sufism’s ethical framework as a moral foundation, the programs tend to emphasize environmental awareness and community mobilization over deeper ascetic practices or spiritual detachment. This indicates a gap between the rich, inward spiritual discipline central to Sufism and external, collective environmental action.

Practically, this means that although Sufi values enhance public engagement and deepen the moral impetus for environmental care, their full transformative potential on individual behavior (e.g., adopting *zuhud* as a lifestyle against consumerism) remains limited in Kemenag’s nationwide green policies. The ecological activism promoted is effective in mobilizing community efforts and embedding stewardship as religious duty, but might not always challenge materialistic consumption patterns strongly associated with modern environmental degradation.

The Sufi notion of *khalifah fil ardh*—human stewardship of the earth—also receives significant emphasis. Sufis view this stewardship not merely as a mandate to manage resources but as a responsibility to maintain ecological balance. Authority over nature carries the moral duty not to harm it. In Green Kemenag, this principle serves as a moral foundation for civil servants, madrasah teachers, religious counselors, and religious communities to lead in ecological behavior change. They are encouraged to not only “green” the physical environment but also transform ecological consciousness in education, preaching, and public service (Arief, 2024; Febriani, 2018). The strength of this value lies in empowering stakeholders at multiple levels to become ecological agents of change. Nonetheless, varying levels of awareness and resources across regions can create gaps in implementation, limiting uniformity and impact. Capacity-building and localized contextualization will be key for effective stewardship realization.

By drawing on these Sufi values, the Green Kemenag movement becomes an actualization of Sufi ethics within public policy. The initiative targets not only physical change but also deeper consciousness transformation, consistent with the Sufi emphasis on inner transformation as the root of social change. When individuals undergo spiritual transformation, their actions toward the environment become more thoughtful and ethical (Suhaimi, 2021).

Nevertheless, integrating Sufi values into public policy like Green Kemenag faces challenges. Some interpret Sufism narrowly as mere ritual practice, disconnected from social and ecological realities. Many perceive Sufism as a personal path irrelevant to contemporary issues such as climate change and environmental degradation. Yet Islamic history shows that classical Sufis like Abdul Qadir al-Jilani, Hasan al-Bashri, and Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari actively engaged in social movements, including ecological justice. To remain relevant, Sufism must be revitalized—Green Kemenag can serve as a gateway to asserting that Sufism is a spiritual path that is contextual, transformative, and socially engaged. Overcoming misconceptions about Sufism requires robust religious education and public discourse that connect spiritual practices with ecological activism, enhancing public engagement and policy acceptance.

Furthermore, this integration requires strong institutional commitment. Green Kemenag should not end as mere ceremonies or short-lived projects; it must be embedded into religious education curricula, civil servant training, sermon content, and organizational culture to sustain environmental ethics. Only then can inner Sufi values serve as reliable foundations for outward, impactful ecological actions. This points to the practical need for process institutionalization, monitoring mechanisms, and continuous capacity-building to secure long term effectiveness and community buy-in.

If consistently and comprehensively developed, Green Kemenag can serve as a concrete example of how Islamic values—especially Sufism—can respond to global ecological challenges. Beyond cleaning up or greening efforts, this movement carries deep spiritual meaning: rekindling the sacred bond between humans and nature as part of devotion to God. By infusing Sufi spirit into environmental policy, Indonesia demonstrates not only a moderate and civilized face of Islam but also pioneers ecological spirituality in a world grappling with meaning and sustainability crises.

#### 4. Conclusion

The *Green Movement* initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia represents a strategic effort that integrates the spiritual dimension of Sufism with ecological awareness in the context of environmental conservation. Sufi values such as *zuhd* (asceticism), *shukr* (gratitude), and *tafakkur* (contemplation) serve as strong moral and spiritual foundations in shaping Islamic environmental ethics. Through programs such as *Green Waqf*, the planting of one million matoa trees, and eco-theological education in madrasahs and pesantrens, the Ministry has successfully internalized Sufi values into tangible environmental practices.

This approach not only broadens public ecological consciousness but also cultivates inner awareness that drives sustainable behavioral change. Environmental stewardship, from an Islamic perspective, is not merely a social duty or ecological responsibility but an integral part of worship and the divine trust (*amanah*) of humans as stewards (*khalifah*) on Earth. By emphasizing harmony between humans, nature, and God, the Green Kemenag movement opens a space for profound spiritual transformation alongside practical actions to address environmental crises and climate change.

Nevertheless, challenges remain—such as limited public understanding of *eco-Sufism* and constrained resources—which must be addressed through enhanced education, outreach, and cross-sector collaboration. Therefore, the development of Sufi-based Islamic green movements must continue to be encouraged and expanded in scope to contribute meaningfully to environmental sustainability in Indonesia.

The integration of Sufi values into policy, education, and religious practice is key to building a holistic and sustainable ecological awareness while strengthening religion's role as a driver of positive social change. In this way, the movement serves not only as an ecological solution but also as a spiritual response capable of fostering true harmony between humans, nature, and the Divine.

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