



**GREENSEAM®**

GREENSEAM  
**FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC  
PLAN 2024-2028**

SUMMARY REPORT  
SEPTEMBER 2024





# GREENSEAM FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

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## ABOUT GREENSEAM

For more details about GreenSeam and its work, please visit the website:

<https://greenseam.org>



REPORT PREPARED BY:

**future→iQ**<sup>®</sup>  
Create Future Intelligence<sup>®</sup>





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# »»»» PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY

GreenSeam is a unique purpose-based association focused on the future of food, agriculture, and the bioeconomy.

The strategic planning sessions conducted in 2023-24 allowed GreenSeam to review progress and refine a future strategic direction. Some key takeaways from the planning review include:

**The GreenSeam mission and vision remains relevant and important.**

We expect the mission and vision to define the organization for the foreseeable future. This highlights the foresight of the original board as they established the organization. GreenSeam's mission is to elevate our region as the world-class food and agribusiness epicenter. GreenSeam's vision is to shape the future of agriculture, businesses, and communities in the region.

**The GreenSeam value proposition remains very strong.**

We expect our value proposition to be even more important over the coming decade. At the core of the value proposition is the ability to build a unified regional voice to leverage the 'future of biomass / bioeconomy' and support our vital food and agriculture sectors.

**Food and agriculture sectors expected to become even more critical to the region's future.**

Our analysis of macro trends has highlighted the global importance of our regional food and agriculture sectors. Our forecasts suggest these sectors will become even more critical and will drive the regional economy. We anticipate a need to put focused effort on our region's strengths.

**GreenSeam is the logical 'go-to' entity for food, agriculture, and the bioeconomy sectors.**

At the heart of our strategic plan is the notion that GreenSeam is the logical 'go-to' entity for the food, agriculture, and emerging bio-economy sectors. To fulfill on this role and opportunity, we have identified that we need to convene, build, and strengthen the regional ecosystem; and expand our strategic leverage. This is complemented with our work on amplifying the GreenSeam brand and building the talent pipeline.

The planning process has laid out our strategic framework for the next five years. We remain very excited by prospects for the food and agriculture sectors, and we are enthusiastic about the potential of new innovations within the emerging bioeconomy sectors. This planning work has been driven by our Board of Governors, and we are appreciative of the input we have received from our wide network of stakeholders and investors. What excites me most are the 50+ business and organizational leaders who are part of our GreenSeam Board and committees and how they will help further design this work in the coming years.



*Sam Ziegler*



**Sam Ziegler**  
President & Director

# GREENSEAM MISSION AND VISION

**Mission:** Elevate the GreenSeam region as the world-class food and agribusiness epicenter.

**Vision:** Positively shape the future of agriculture, businesses, and communities in the region.

GreenSeam was founded in 2016. The GreenSeam region is broadly defined as covering southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. Agriculture is the largest industry sector within the GreenSeam region with over \$15 billion in sales annually. Most businesses in this region are either part of agriculture's value stream or are indirectly impacted. They span the economic continuum, including production, processing, manufacturing, professional services, research, technology, education, and transportation. The region boasts an extensive list of agriculture and food business concentration with more than 1,000 agriculture related businesses.



## KEY INSIGHT

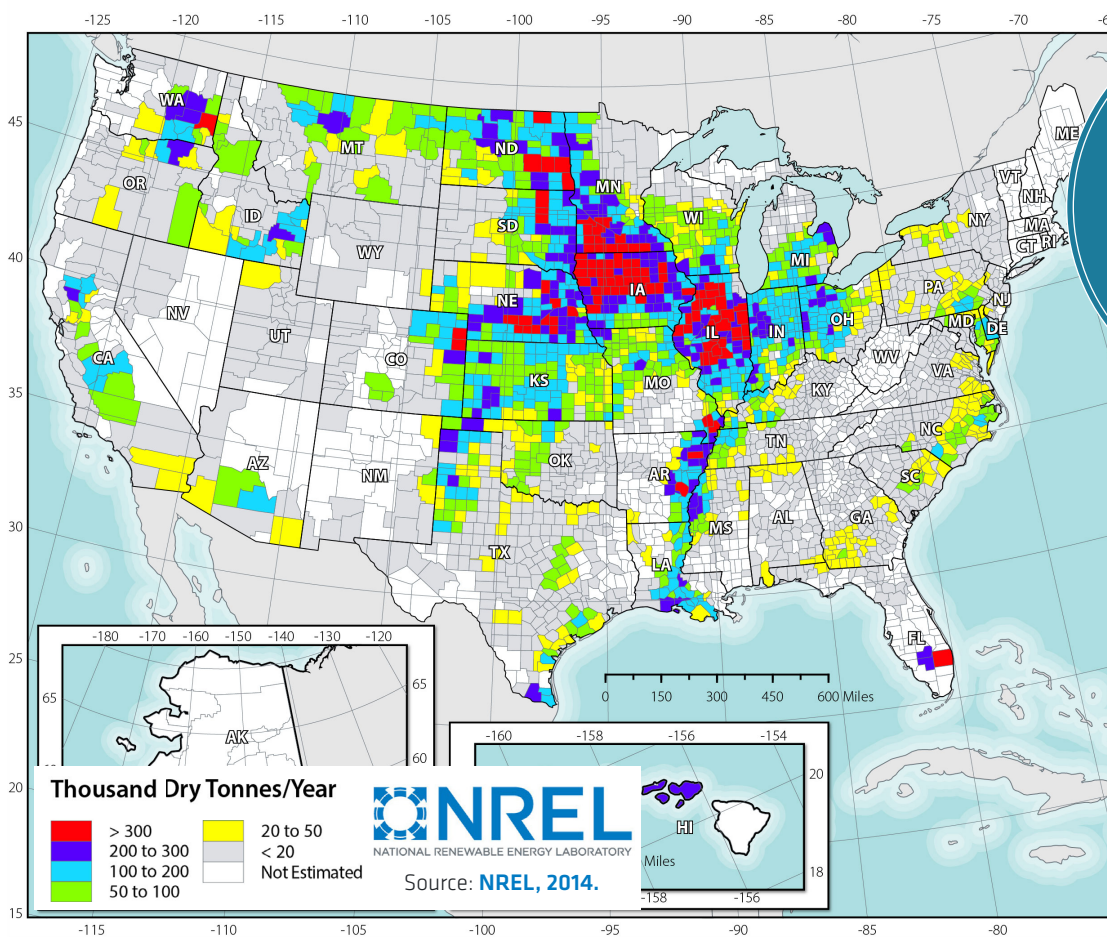
GreenSeam is focused on the growth of businesses in the region, which will grow and strengthen our rural communities. Food, agriculture, and the bioeconomy are best poised to make this impact.

# GREENSEAM VALUE PROPOSITION

The ability to produce food and biomass is a key economic driver for the upper Midwest and the GreenSeam region. Building a unified regional voice to leverage the 'future of biomass' is a key part of the GreenSeam value proposition.


Overall, the GreenSeam region has some of the highest levels of solid biomass resources per square kilometer in the United States and the world. This biomass production capability is the foundation of new possibilities in the bioeconomy (industries that are based on the biomass source material). This can range from foods, fuel, plastic replacements, and oils. The GreenSeam region's combination of food production capability, abundant fresh water, and access to renewable energy uniquely positions it as a key player in the coming food and bioeconomy revolution.

## Crop Residue in the United States



The future importance of the GreenSeam region should not be underestimated. In a world facing food production challenges, the region can play an out-sized role in shaping the future of the food and bioeconomy sectors.





**KEY INSIGHT**

GreenSeam is uniquely positioned to be at the forefront of the conversation about the future of biomass and its importance to the GreenSeam region. GreenSeam works best at the big picture level, helping put the regional food and agriculture sectors in the global context.



# GREENSEAM STRATEGIC PILLAR FRAMEWORK

The strategic pillar framework presents a roadmap for GreenSeam over the next five years. It introduces some new strategic elements and builds on the impactful work that has been done over the previous decade.

The strategic pillars were developed from the 2023-24 strategic planning workshop sessions and subsequent discussions with the board and staff. Each pillar is supported by a key objective and several action areas.

## PILLAR 1: CONVENE AND BUILD THE REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM

*Build collaboration and partnerships across the regional food and agriculture ecosystem*

## PILLAR 2: POSITION GREENSEAM AS THE 'GO-TO' VOICE FOR FOOD, AGRICULTURE, AND BIOECONOMY

*Enhance strategic influence by positioning GreenSeam as the 'go-to' voice for innovation, investment, and policy*

## BUILD A UNIFIED VOICE AND LEAD A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO ADVANCE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IN THE GREENSEAM REGION



## PILLAR 4: AMPLIFY THE GREENSEAM BRAND

*Advance GreenSeam's profile as a purpose-based association focused on the future of food, agriculture, and the bioeconomy*

## PILLAR 3: DRIVE WORKFORCE ATTRACTION AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

*Build the global talent pipeline and enhance the connection to food and agriculture innovation*



# »»»»» PILLAR 1: CONVENE AND BUILD THE REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Build collaboration and partnerships across the regional food and agriculture ecosystem.

One of the key strategic shifts that emerged as a result of the strategic planning workshop discussions was the opportunity for GreenSeam to play a more direct role in convening the regional ecosystem around important topics. This will help build partnerships, expand the GreenSeam reach and influence, and assist with aligning key groups in support of the agriculture, food, and bioeconomy efforts.

Proposed strategic action areas to support this pillar include:



### CONVENE ECOSYSTEM AROUND FUTURE-ORIENTED ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

GreenSeam has identified that it works best at the big-picture level and in helping build future-readiness and awareness of the agriculture, food, and bioeconomy sectors. There is also the opportunity to provide thought-leadership by convening the ecosystem to explore and understand future-oriented big picture issues and opportunities. This is also a key part of the GreenSeam value proposition.



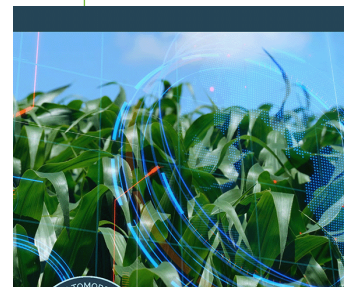
### IDENTIFY KEY PARTNERS AND MAP THE ECOSYSTEM

To act as the convener and conductor of an ecosystem requires having a clear picture of the existing network and how it connects. GreenSeam should intentionally map the key players and their relationships, especially those involved in emerging efforts around food and bioeconomy.



### ENGAGE WITH THE REGIONAL PLANNING FOCUS AREA ON FOOD AND BIOECONOMY

Communities in the region are embarking on a long-term regional planning effort and have identified the food, agricultural, and bio-economy sectors as a key strategic proposition for the region. GreenSeam should strongly engage with this regional planning as it is perfectly matched with the organizational mission and strategic focus.



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### KEY INSIGHT

The ability for GreenSeam to create a unified voice is a key part of the overall value proposition. The business case for becoming a GreenSeam investor includes the unique access to resources, influence, and information.



## PILLAR 2: POSITION GREENSEAM AS THE 'GO-TO' VOICE FOR FOOD, AGRICULTURE, AND BIOECONOMY

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:** Enhance strategic influence by positioning GreenSeam as the 'go-to' voice for innovation, investment, and policy.

There are significant regional investments and initiatives related to the bioeconomy that are being planned where GreenSeam can play an important role. Proposed strategic action areas to support this pillar include:



### **BUILD CONNECTION TO BUSINESS LEADERS AND MAJOR LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES**

To create additional leverage and influence, GreenSeam needs to be on the inside track and know 'what is happening before it happens.' This especially applies to major initiatives or investments where GreenSeam can help influence key decisions, such as steering potential projects to occur within the region. The same applies to major legislative initiatives happening at a State and Federal level.



### **BE A RESOURCE OF INFORMATION AND LEADER IN DATA**

To further enhance the region, GreenSeam should produce and publish white papers and Thought Leadership Articles on relevant and forward-looking topics. This will provide investors, businesses, and communities with the foresight to actively address challenges and take advantage of the opportunities to succeed.



### **CONNECT WITH LARGER REGIONAL INITIATIVES**

GreenSeam, with its focus on convening and ecosystem development, must play a role in connecting with larger regional initiatives and packaging and promoting their work. Examples include the MN Dept of Ag green fertilizer and the University of MN FAARM project, which offer some direct relevance and interest to GreenSeam members but is not yet connected to the local ecosystem.



### **KEY INSIGHT**

GreenSeam plays an important role as the 'go-to' organization for food and agriculture innovation. This role is critical to the vitality and strategic positioning of the broader region.

# »»»»» PILLAR 3: DRIVE WORKFORCE ATTRACTION AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Build the global talent pipeline and enhance the connection to food and agriculture innovation.

All industrial sectors are working to address the talent development issue. It is a competitive race to attract a workforce with the skills to support emerging Industry 4.0 and STEM technologies. The food, agriculture, and bioeconomy is undergoing its own quiet revolution and is generating the demand for new talent and a skilled workforce. The GreenSeam region has already done solid work in this area, which can be expanded. During the strategic planning process, the future role of technology and innovation was discussed. It was recognized that it will be critical in supporting and stimulating future-ready food and agricultural sector innovation.

Proposed strategic action areas to support this pillar include:



### DEEPEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO BUILD GLOBAL TALENT PIPELINE

Regional planning has identified the potential to become a ‘human talent hub’ built around regional educational institutions and the existing student base. The particularly exciting part is the access to an international student base at colleges and universities in the region and the opportunity to build global recognition of the GreenSeam region as an epicenter for education on the food, biosciences, and bioeconomy.



### TAP INTO LOCAL TALENT PIPELINE TO PROMOTE LOCAL BIOSCIENCES AND AGRICULTURE

GreenSeam has run exceptionally effective programs that tap into the local K-12 talent pipeline to promote local opportunities in biosciences and agriculture. This work is essential, as it continues to present the relevant career paths for local students and educates people about the importance and opportunity in the sector. It will be critical to encourage recognition that biosciences extends well beyond a traditional view of agriculture and is a globally relevant field.



### BUILD A REGIONAL INNOVATION NETWORK OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS

The GreenSeam region already hosts numerous companies and institutions that have cutting-edge technological capabilities. These entities have technology-focused staff, which cumulatively represents the significant scale of talent and skills. GreenSeam Futures can help build a cross-entity network of these technology specialists, which may then boost the capacity for problem solving and applied technology in the region.



#### KEY INSIGHT

The GreenSeam region has the potential to become a global and national destination for talent that is interested in the future bioeconomy.

# »»»»» PILLAR 4: AMPLIFY THE GREENSEAM BRAND



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Advance GreenSeam’s profile as a purpose-based association focused on the future of food, agriculture, and the bioeconomy

The importance and value of the GreenSeam brand was continually highlighted throughout the planning process. Stakeholders recognize that GreenSeam has a major role to gather and harness a unified voice that speaks to the issues that are important to the GreenSeam region. It is an important role to inform and educate people about the modern and evolving nature of agriculture and food production. In addition, the immense potential opportunity in the emerging bioeconomy also needs to be promoted.

Proposed strategic action areas to support this pillar include:



### **BUILD REGIONAL ENTHUSIASM FOR FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND THE BIOECONOMY**

The modern world of agriculture is technology-packed, focuses on sustainability, and plays a direct role in human health. There is an opportunity to broaden the ‘ag’ conversation to encompass healthy food, human wellbeing, and environmental management. This encompasses the broad fields of biosciences, which could create the cutting-edge narrative that GreenSeam deserves.



### **CONNECT THE GREENSEAM BRAND TO THE REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY**

The GreenSeam region is a potential global powerhouse for the future food and bio-economy sectors. There is an opportunity to engage more communities and businesses within the GreenSeam Region and further connect people to the resources of the organization. Better identifying the regional geography could help consolidate the brand.



### **ELEVATE THE SOCIAL LICENSE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR**

Societal endorsement of the agricultural sector remains strong but must be continually reinforced. This means ensuring that it maintains public support, including public education and policy support.



### **KEY INSIGHT**

It is critical to position agriculture as a future-oriented and evolving industry and draw a clear connection between agriculture, food, human health, and environmental solutions. Concepts such as ‘food as medicine’ open the door to interesting regional collaborations with the health care sector.

# »»»»» NEXT STEPS AND SHORT-TERM PRIORITIZATION

The planning review provided a high-level strategic analysis but was not intended to be an operational review. However, the process did explore areas where efforts need to be increased and where effort could be decreased.

The short-term prioritization of the pillars, explored further in the second stakeholder survey, helped identify important initial areas for effort. In addition, discussions highlighted areas where effort could be increased or decreased. The operational implications and implementations will be assessed by the GreenSeam staff.

## ↑ AREAS WHERE EFFORT NEEDS TO BE INCREASED

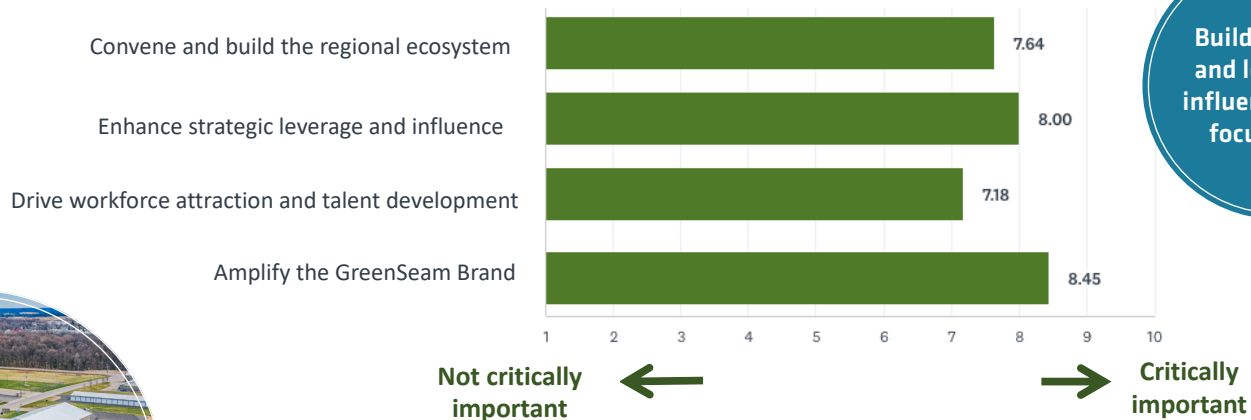
- Work at 'big picture' level
- Build influence and networks
- Build brand and social license
- Set the table for big conversations
- Talent attraction and creation

## ↓ AREAS WHERE EFFORT COULD BE DECREASED

- Local economic development

### Focus for Next 12 Months

How much emphasis should be placed on each strategic pillar over the next 12 months - where should we be putting the biggest focus?



Building brand and leveraging influence are key focus areas.

Survey results from strategic planning work with stakeholders (2023)



### KEY INSIGHT

The amplification of the GreenSeam brand is a key step in building the profile and influence of the organization. This has been identified a top priority for the next 12 months. Building GreenSeam's strategic leverage and influence of is an essential step in enhancing the value proposition of the organization.



## »»»» MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the GreenSeam strategic plan review, please contact:

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For more details about GreenSeam and its work, please visit the website at:

<https://greenseam.org>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - BOARD OF GOVERNORS

As elected volunteers, our Board of Governors is committed to redefining agribusiness. They provided invaluable insight and feedback throughout the strategic planning process.

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