

## AKINONIA

**Size:** 123,745 km<sup>2</sup>

**Boundaries:** Borders on the north with Derumalia, on the west with the Kingdom of Konfundensia and on the south and east with the Fathomless Sea.

**Capital:** Palmyra

**Population:** 9.5 million

**GDP per capita:** US\$4,200

**GPD Composition by Sector:** agriculture 70%; industry 10%; services 20%.

**Agricultural Products:** oilseeds, tobacco, fruit, and ornamental plants.

**Industries:** mining, fishing and fish processing, timber.

**Services:** tourism.

**Natural Resources:** minerals, timber, hydro power, fish.

**Urbanization:** 42%

**Climate:** Subtropical with wet and dry seasons in low lying areas. More temperate in the mountains.

**Geography:** Akinonia is flat except for the Tarambana Mountains in the northern department of Upper Sambara. With the exception of Selachian Province, Akinonian soil is rich, even close to coastal areas. Among the primary geographical are the Shrouded Forest, the Adonis Swamp, the Seals Peninsula, the Tilapi Archipelago, and the Selachian Coast.

Most of the eastern section of the surviving woodlands of the **Shrouded Forest** is in Akinonia. This ecosystem is remarkable for its diversity of wild flora and fauna. Native species include endangered varieties of wild cats and birds of prey.

The **Adonis Swamp** is a giant wetland bisected by the Sambara River. Certain bird and mammal species, including felines, migrate between the swamp and the Shrouded Forest. The swamp has an impact on the volume and quality of water in the Sambara River.

The **Seals Peninsula** is flanked by Astonishment Bay and Etruria Bay. Two sites of interest are found on the peninsula: the central core of ancient Sumerostan, which is a World Heritage site, and Seals Peninsula National Park, with its protective regime for certain species of cetaceans and pinnipeds.

The four principal islands of the **Tilapi Archipelago** are Dusk Island, Harbinger Island, Daybreak Island, and Windy Island. The Tilapi ethnic group of about 300,000 people inhabits the archipelago.

**Flora and Fauna:** endangered wild cats and bird of prey, marine mammals (whales, seals).

**History:** The Tilapi people, believed by some to have founded Sumerostan, the great civilization that once dominated the entire basin, and the ancestors of the Konfundesians, now live on the archipelago of four islands located in the Takong Delta.

The bulk of the Sumerostanis migrated north, until they were rebuffed by the Palmyrians, a hostile mountain people, and forced to cede a large part of their territory: the area south of

the Mumbara and Takong Rivers including the Seal Peninsula.

After winning this war, the Palmyrians, ancestors to the Akinonians, expanded rapidly to the south and established their first capital at Styropolis. In the mid-eighteenth century, an earthquake destroyed more than 60% of Styropolis and the capital was moved south to the site of Palmyra where the Kingdom of Akinonia was founded. It was governed under the principles of the 1884 Palmyra Pact, a royal declaration. The following decades were characterized by peaceful coexistence with indigenous and other neighboring groups. In 1959, there was no successor to the throne, which opened the way to the republican period.

**Political Organization:** The 1985 Constitution establishes that Akinonia is a democratic republic with a presidential system.

For many years Akinonia was a unitary state with a centralized government. In recent years, however, mainly because of pressure from civil society, policies that favor the decentralization of decision making have been introduced, and local governments have been given the power to regulate the use of natural resources, to establish protected areas, and increasingly to be consulted on decisions being made at the national level.

The current government is a coalition of socialist parties, most importantly the **Akinonian Workers Party** and the **Green Party**. In the one year that this coalition has been in power, it has broken with a conservative political tradition that lasted nearly 25 years by promoting citizen participation and overseeing the decentralization and democratization of state institutions. A constitutional amendment in 1998 allowed for the increased participation of indigenous and local groups in decision-making processes by providing them with a role in local environmental councils.

**Civil Society:** citizen participation has increased notably in the past several years, which has had a profoundly democratizing effect on the country and increased the transparency of its political institutions. Social, environmental, human rights, and indigenous affairs organizations have taken their place on the national political stage and promoted decentralization, especially by establishing and participating in more representative local councils with increased administrative authority. The major civil society organizations are Save Our Swamp, an environmental group focused on threats to the Adonis Swamp, and Tilapi Forever, an indigenous group that promotes sustainable economic development of the Tilapi people.

**Territorial Organization:** Akinonia is divided into six departments: Gloria, Paladins, Selachian, Sovereignty, Upper Sambara, and Victory. Victory and Sovereignty are located at random or outside the Takong basin.

#### **Major Cities:**

- **Palmyra**, the capital with a population of 1.5 million, is the country's principal economic center and its busiest port, with activity tripling in the last 10 years.
- **Styropolis** is the capital of Upper Sambara Department, located on the Sambara River near the border with Konfundesia, close to the Adonis Swamp and the mining belt of Argenta in the Tarambana Mountains. It was the center of Palmyrian society before Akinonia was founded at Palmyra and has become Akinonia's second most important city.
- **Alchemy** is the capital of Paladins Department, which is known for its agricultural and livestock areas. With a population of 250,000, it is the third largest city. It is located on the lower Sambara River and connected by a road bridge across the Sambara to the Konfundesian city of Saline. Downstream from

Alchemy is the Papyrus Dam which prevents navigation to the sea. Both Alchemy and Styropolis are connected to the port city of Palmyra, below the dam, by road and railroad.

- **Etruria** is the capital of the Department of Gloria and Akinonia's only coastal city. The tourism industry has given new life to the city after a long period of dormancy. It is now the port of entry for tourists visiting the archipelago, the archaeological site of Sumerostan, and all the other destinations on the Seals Peninsula.

**Water/Environment–Related Legislation:** Constitutional amendments in 1998 declared that all inhabitants of Akinonia have the right to a healthy environment, and required the state to ensure that the country's natural environment and natural resources be protected. Later, the right of aboriginal peoples to self-determination was recognized, as were their forms of social organization and their right to administer their affairs in keeping with their own traditions.

Akinonia has a **General Law on the Environment**, approved in 2001 to provide a legal framework for compliance with the 1998 constitutional amendment. The law provided new instruments for managing environmental affairs and established the **National Ministry of the Environment** and the **National Secretariats of Environmental Management, Wildlife, Forests, Water Resources, and Coasts and Fishing Resources** as well as local **Environmental Councils** with authority over a wide range of related matters. The General Law on the Environment also provides a legal framework for the implementation of the **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)** for all activities and processes that might impact the environment in any significant way. It also includes provisions for a system of **Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES)**. So far, the PES system has been implemented only in a pilot project to ameliorate the effects of deforestation in the Tarambana Mountains and

maintain a constant flow of water into the Adonis Swamp.

While the General Law on the Environment requires the monitoring and control of sources of water pollution and establishes the need to preserve ecosystems, particularly those related to fresh and coastal waters, Akinonia does not have legislation specifically focused on water resources.

The **1994 National Forest Law** focuses on the conservation, improvement, restoration, and growth of the country's forest resources through the rational use and management of forests and the appropriate development and integration of forest-based industries.

The **1995 National Wildlife Law** regulates all activities related to wildlife management including permits, licenses, hunting seasons, prohibitions, and wildlife protection, as well as the management of the national system of protected areas.

**Water–Related Administrative Structure:** **National Ministry of the Environment** and the **National Secretariats of Environmental Management, Wildlife, Forests, Water Resources, and Coasts and Fishing Resources** as well as local **Environmental Councils** with authority over a wide range of related matters were established by the General Law on the Environment.

**Weaknesses of Legal and Policy Framework:** The policy framework is generally consistent, but the government is very new and inexperienced so ministers do not always take advantage of their full powers.

**International Agreements:** Internationally, Akinonia is a member of the United Nations and a party to the most important multilateral agreements on the environment including the Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change, World Health Organization, Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. With regard to water resources, the country has signed the Convention on the Law of Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses.

### **Water Issues:**

**Adonis Swamp:** The mining and agriculture carried out in the Department of Upper Sambara threaten the swamp, which is a Ramsar site. The Green Party is pushing for the establishment of protected areas in the Department of Upper Sambara.

**Shrouded Forest:** The ecosystem is threatened by political division (two countries with two different systems of oversight and management); extractive activities such as logging, which moves ever deeper into the forest; and mining. The proposal to grant new mining concessions, particularly within or near the Shrouded Forest, has met with the opposition of environmentalists and other sectors of civil society.

**Seals Peninsula:** Dredging a channel through Astonishment Bay to the deep water port city of Estambay is a profound threat to the cetaceans of the Seals Peninsula.

**Tilapi ethnic group** is indigenous to the region (probably the ancestral group to the people of Konfundesia) and now consists of some 300,000 people whose traditions include fishing and collecting mollusks. In recent years their traditional way of life has been threatened by tourist development, particularly new hotels in the western part of the delta and on the Selachian Coast, which have led to the introduction of the money economy and alien and unfamiliar social and cultural practices. The Tilapi have a small tourist industry of crafts and

tours, which they feel is often overwhelmed by the private tourism industry.

**Dams:** The Papyrus Dam, a run-of-the-river dam, is being enlarged and proposals to construct a new dam on the Sambara River 75 km upstream from the city of Styropolis has met with opposition from Save Our Swamp and locals who say it will ruin the Adonis Swamp. Konfundesia opposes the enlargement of the Papyrus Dam because it already interferes with operation of the Tarpon Canal.

**Energy:** The energy sector is in the hands of **Electrical Services of Akinonia (ESA)**, a mixed-capital enterprise in which the state retains the majority share. The sector is under serious scrutiny by environmental groups and has recently been harshly criticized for significant irregularities in the provision of electrical and water service.

The primary source of energy is hydropower. The **Papyrus Dam** on the lower Takong River provides 50% of the country's energy. The remainder is supplied by oil-fired power stations located in the principal urban areas. The use of imported oil has led the country and in particular the ESA to rethink energy policy and adopt an Energy Efficiency Plan (EEP) with three components:

- The enlargement of the Papyrus Dam to increase its generating capacity. This project is now underway after receiving a significant loan from the World Bank.
- The use of **wind energy**. Two pilot wind farms have been installed on the Seal Peninsula. These two installations (Sumerostan I and II) have been so productive that additional ones (Sumerostan III, IV, and V) have been proposed and approved after successful feasibility studies.
- The **Upper Sambara project**, which entails the construction of a hydroelectric dam some 75 km upstream from the city of

Styropolis. This project has met with opposition from civil society and several political sectors, including some within the governing coalition. Nevertheless, a feasibility study has had positive results and funds have been made available for construction to proceed.

Energy self-sufficiency is an important issue for Akinonia, a country with an expanding economy. Thus these projects have continued to move forward despite significant opposition.

**Transportation:** Akinonia has two river ports (Styropolis and Alchemy) and one port with both river and sea access (Palmyra).

Palmyra is the country's principal port and is expected to become the major port in the region as a whole. Located 50 km from the mouth of the Takong, it is the principal point of ingress and egress from the country for freight, passengers, and tourists. Work on expanding this port, which will make it the most important port in the region, will begin within 12 months. The project will include building new terminals and making necessary changes such as the dredging of a deep channel for access by deep-draft vessels including cruise ships and cargo ships. This project is part of the **Operational Plan for Port Development in Akinonia (OPPDA)**, which also includes the modernization of river port facilities in Styropolis and Alchemy.

The country's main cities are interconnected by a **highway system** operated by a public-private joint venture called Highways of Akinonia, responsible to the Ministry of Transportation.

The country's **railroads** are operated by a state-owned enterprise (Railroads of Akinonia - RA) and carry both freight and passengers. A privately financed project was recently approved to construct a new rail line from Palmyra to the Seals Peninsula by way of Etruria.

**Economy:** The economy of Akinonia is based on agriculture, timber, fishing, and fish packing, and tourism.

**Agriculture:** Agriculture is concentrated in the departments of Gloria, Paladins, and Upper Sambara (above all on the eastern bank of the Sambara River), and focused on oilseeds, tobacco, fruit, and ornamental plants, all for export.

Timbering is concentrated in the Department of Upper Sambara. Over the last 10 years, Akinonia has adopted incentives to establish forest plantations to protect the Shrouded Forest. Environmentalists believe that this policy has incentivized the use of high-yield species, but also increased water consumption, which has led to the extraction of significant volumes of water from the upper Sambara basin and which, in the short term, will have a significant negative effect on wetlands.

At the same time, many farmers have switched to soybean production to meet strong demand on the world market. According to the most recent studies, this could compromise the competitiveness of the agricultural sector in the medium-term by limiting diversification and promoting monoculture.

**Fishing:** Deep-sea fishing is well developed. The country has several fish processing facilities on the Selachian Coast, where products are prepared for export.

**Mining:** Mining plays an important role in Akinonia's economy: silver, copper, and gold deposits in Upper Sambara were exploited by the early Palmyrians. Akinonia recently awarded new mining concessions to private companies. Mining operations are regulated by national legislation.

**Tourism:** Natural features attractive to domestic and international tourism include the Adonis Swamp, the Seals Peninsula, and the Tilapi Archipelago. Akinonia has successfully

exploited these areas by providing incentives for private tourist industry development, by building more efficient transportation

infrastructure including ports and airports, and by instituting policies attractive to high-end consumers from outside the country.