Supplementary Appendix

Engineered resistance to Zika virus in transgenic *Ae. aegypti* expressing a polycistronic cluster of synthetic small RNAs

Authors:

Anna Buchman^{1&}, Stephanie Gamez^{1&}, Ming Li¹, Igor Antoshechkin³, Shin-Hang Lee^{4,5,6}, Shin-Wei Wang^{5,6}, Chun-Hong Chen^{5,6}, Melissa J. Klein⁷, Jean-Bernard Duchemin^{7#}, Prasad N. Paradkar^{7*} and Omar S. Akbari^{1,2*}

Affiliations:

¹ Section of Cell and Developmental Biology, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, California, United States of America ²Tata Institute for Genetics and Society-UCSD ³ Division of Biology and Biological Engineering, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, 91125, USA ⁴ Institute of Biotechnology, National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu, Taiwan ⁵ National Institute of Infectious Diseases and Vaccinology, National Health Research Institutes, Zhunan, Taiwan ⁶ National Mosquito-Borne Diseases Control Research Center, National Health Research

Institutes, Zhunan, Taiwan.

⁷CSIRO Health and Biosecurity, Australian Animal Health Laboratory, 5 Portarlington Road, Geelong, VIC, 3220, Australia

#Current Address: Institut Pasteur de la Guyane, Cayenne, French Guiana

*Correspondence to: oakbari@ucsd.edu & Prasad.Paradkar@csiro.au

& equal contributions

Supplementary Appendix Contents

❖ **SI Materials and Methods**

- \triangleright Synthetic anti-ZIKV small RNAs design and construction
- \triangleright Plasmid Assembly
- \triangleright Generation of Transgenic Mosquitoes
- \triangleright Characterization of Transgene Genomic Insertion Sites
- \triangleright Small RNA Extraction, Isolation, Sequencing, and Bioinformatics
- ➢ RT-PCR Confirmation of anti-ZIKV Transgene Expression
- ➢ ZIKV Infection of Mosquitoes, Virus Determination, and Longevity
- ➢ Generation of *w*Mel *Wolbachia* Line and Infection Assay
- \triangleright Mouse Transmission Assays
- \triangleright Fitness Assessment and Conditions
- \triangleright Confirmation of Transgene Zygosity

❖ **Data Availability Statement**

- ❖ **SI Appendix Figures**
	- ➢ **SI Appendix Fig. S1:** Small RNA target site conservation between ZIKV strains H/PF/2013, FSS13025, and PRVABC59.
	- ➢ **SI Appendix Fig. S2:** Effect of anti-ZIKV transgene on ZIKV titres in four independent mosquito lines.
	- ➢ **SI Appendix Fig. S3.** Differential expression analysis of small RNAs from Higgs WT and TZIKV-C mosquito midguts.
	- ➢ **SI Appendix Fig. S4.** RT-PCR analysis of non-blood fed and 24-hr post blood fed Higgs WT and TZIKV-C female midgut and carcass samples.
	- ➢ **SI Appendix Fig. S5.** Survivorship curve of Higgs WT and TZIKV-C male and female mosquitoes.

❖ **SI Appendix Tables**

- ➢ **SI Appendix Table S1.** Quantification of endogenous and engineered small RNA expression on read and UMI (Unique Molecular Identifiers) levels in Higgs WT and TZIKV-C mosquitoes prior to blood meal (NBF) and 24 hr post blood feeding (PBM).
- ➢ **SI Appendix Table S2.** Anti-ZIKV transgene effect on ZIKV infection, dissemination, and transmission rates. ZIKV infection rates were quantified in the midgut at 4 days post infection (dpi).
- ➢ **SI Appendix Table S3.** Fitness evaluation of Higgs WT and TZIKV-C mosquitoes.
- ➢ **SI Appendix Table S4.** The survivorship of ZIKV-infected TZIKV-C mosquitoes at 14 days post infection (dpi).
- ➢ **SI Appendix Table S5.** Primer sequences and small RNA target sites utilized to generate synthetic small RNA constructs used in this study.
- ➢ **SI Appendix Table S6.** Primers used to assemble plasmid OA959C (the anti-ZIKV transgene).
- ➢ **Supplementary Table S7.** Diagnostic primers used for inverse PCR (iPCR) assays, zygosity confirmation, ZIKV NS5 RT-qPCR, and *w*Mel infection confirmation.
- ❖ **SI Appendix References**

SI Materials and Methods

Synthetic anti-ZIKV small RNAs design and construction

The *Drosophila melanogaster* miR6.1 stem-loop, which has been previously validated in *D. melanogaster* [\[1\],](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/KvfZ5) was modified to target eight unique sites in the ZIKV polyprotein region as previously described [\[2\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/D9mSp). The eight target sites corresponded to regions of capsid (C), membrane precursor (prM), and envelope (E) structural genes, RNA-directed RNA polymerase NS5 (which contained three target sites), and non-structural proteins NS1 and NS2A, of ZIKV strain H/PF/2013 (GenBank: KJ776791.2) [\[3\].](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/rJ5O8) These sites were highly conserved in ZIKV strain FSS13025 (Cambodia 2010, Genbank KU955593)[\[4\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/yklmC) and in ZIKV strain PRVABC59 (isolated from US traveller to Puerto Rico in 2015, GenBank KU501215) (SI Appendix Fig. S1). To generate miR6.1 stem-loop backbones that create mature synthetic small RNAs complementary to each of these target sites, pairs of primers were annealed and products were utilized for two subsequent rounds of PCR and cloned into the pFusA backbone (from the Golden Gate TALEN and TAL Effector Kit 2.0, Addgene #1000000024) in sets of four using Golden Gate assembly [\[5\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/EKLOI) to generate plasmids OA959A and OA959B. Assembled small RNAs were then digested with either PmeI/BglII (vector OA959A) or with BamHI/PacI (vector OA959B) and were subcloned into a PacI/PmeI-digested final vector OA959C (the anti-ZIKV transgene). The ZIKV target sequences and sequences of primers used in the small RNA cloning are listed in SI Appendix Table S5.

Plasmid Assembly

To generate vector OA959C (the anti-ZIKV transgene), several components were cloned into the *piggyBac* plasmid pBac[3xP3-DsRed] [\[6\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/MK6iI) using Gibson assembly/EA cloning [\[7\].](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/tqWGt) First, a *Drosophila* codon optimized tdTomato marker was amplified with primers 959C.10A and 959C.10B from a gene synthesized vector (GenScript, Piscataway, NJ) and cloned into a XhoI/FseI digested pBac[3xP3-DsRed] backbone using EA cloning. The resulting plasmid was digested with AscI, and the following components were cloned in via EA cloning: the predicted *Aedes aegypti* carboxypeptidase promoter [\[8\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/O7eZA) amplified from *Ae. aegypti* genomic DNA using primers 959C.11A and 959C.11B, a GFP sequence amplified from vector pMos[3xP3-eGFP] [\[9\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/VTP2M) with primers 959C.12A and 959C.12B, and a 677 bp p10 3' untranslated region (UTR) amplified with primers 959C.13A and 959C.13B from vector pJFRC81-10XUAS-IVS-Syn21-GFP-p10 (Addgene plasmid #36432). Assembled small RNA fourmers were then subcloned into final plasmid OA959C using PacI and PmeI using traditional cloning. All primer sequences are listed in SI Appendix Table S6. Complete annotated plasmid sequence and DNA is available via Addgene (plasmid #104968).

Generation of Transgenic Mosquitoes

Germline transformations were carried out largely as described [\[10\].](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/8daqL) Briefly, 0-1 hr old Higgs and Liverpool strain *Ae. aegypti* pre-blastoderm embryos were injected with a mixture of vector OA959C (200 ng/ul) and a source of *piggyBac* transposase (200 ng/ul) [\[9\];](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/VTP2M) the injected embryos were hatched in deoxygenated H₂O. A total of 52 surviving Higgs adult males and 64 surviving Higgs adult females, and 61 surviving adult Liverpool males and 75 surviving adult Liverpool females, respectively, were recovered after the injection. Higgs adults were assigned to 35 pools and Liverpool adults were assigned to 39 pools, and outcrossed to Higgs or Liverpool adults, respectively, of the opposite sex in cages. Larvae were fed ground fish food (TetraMin Tropical Flakes, Tetra Werke, Melle, Germany) and adults were fed with 0.3M aqueous sucrose. Adult females were blood fed three to five days after eclosion using anesthetized mice. All animals were handled in accordance with the guide for the care and use of laboratory animals as recommended by the National Institutes of Health and supervised by the local Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). A total of 8,189 Higgs and 10,949 Liverpool G_1s were screened. Larvae with positive fluorescent signals (3xp3-tdTomato) were selected under the fluorescent stereomicroscope (Leica M165FC) and were crossed to establish stable transgenic lines. Four independent lines (termed TZIKV-A, B, and D recovered from Liverpool G_1 s, and TZIKV-C recovered from Higgs G_1 s) with the strongest fluorescence expression patterns were selected for further characterization. To determine whether these lines represented single chromosomal insertions, we backcrossed single individuals from each of the lines for four generations to wild-type stock, and measured the Mendelian transmission ratios in each generation; in all cases, we observed a 50% transmission ratio, indicating insertion into single chromosomes. For one of the four lines (TZIKV-C), transgenic mosquitoes were inbred for at least 12 generations to generate a homozygous stock. Mosquito husbandry was performed under standard conditions as previously described [\[11\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/ixuUu).

Characterization of Transgene Genomic Insertion Sites

To characterize the insertion site of vector OA959C in transgenic mosquitoes, we adapted a previously described inverse polymerase chain reaction (iPCR) protocol [\[12\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/yWuj2) as follows.

Genomic DNA (gDNA) was extracted from 10 transgenic *Ae. aegypti* fourth instar larvae of each line using the DNAeasy Blood & Tissue Kit (Qiagen #69504) per the manufacturer's protocol. Two separate restriction digests were performed on diluted gDNA to characterize the 5' and 3' ends of the insertion using Sau3AI (5' reaction) or HinP1I (3' reaction) restriction enzymes. A ligation step using NEB T4 DNA Ligase (NEB #M0202S) was performed on the restriction digest products to circularize digested gDNA fragments, and two subsequent rounds of PCR were carried out per ligation using corresponding *piggyBac* primers listed in SI Appendix Table S7. Final PCR products were cleaned up using the MinElute PCR Purification Kit (Qiagen #28004) in accordance with the manufacturer's protocol, and sequenced via Sanger sequencing (Source BioScience, Nottingham, UK). To confirm transgene insertion locus and orientation via PCR, primers were designed based on iPCR mapped genomic regions and used in tandem with *piggyBac* primers based on their location as listed in SI Appendix Table S7. Sequencing data was then blasted to the AaegL5.0 reference genome (NCBI). An alignment of the sequencing data was carried out with SeqManPro (DNASTAR, Madison, WI) to determine orientation of the transgene insertion site. Analysis of the sequencing data indicated that the insertion sites were on chromosome 2 (at approximate position 167,899,561) for line TZIKV-A, on chromosome 3 (at approximate position 402,525,313) for line TZIKV-B, on chromosome 3 (at approximate position 173,647,938) for line TZIKV-C, and on chromosome 1 (at approximate position 228,972,549) for line TZIKV-D. These insertion locations were also confirmed by PCR and sequencing performed on genomic DNA from the transgenic mosquitoes.

Small RNA Extraction, Isolation, Sequencing, and Bioinformatics

Total RNA was extracted from midguts of 30 ZIKV-C transgenic and WT (Higgs strain) non-blood-fed adult females as well as midguts of 30 ZIKV-C transgenic and WT (Higgs strain) adult females 24 hours post blood-feeding using the Ambion mirVana mRNA Isolation Kit (ThermoFisher Scientific #AM1560). Following extraction, RNA was treated with Ambion Turbo DNase (ThermoFisher Scientific #AM2238). The quality of RNA was assessed using RNA 6000 Pico Kit for Bioanalyzer (Agilent Technologies #5067-1513) and a NanoDrop 1000 UV–vis spectrophotometer (NanoDrop Technologies/Thermo Scientific, Wilmington, DE). Small RNA was then extracted and prepared for sequencing with QIAseq miRNA Library Kit (Qiagen #331502). Libraries were quantified with Qubit dsDNA HS Kit (ThermoFisher Scientific #Q32854) and High Sensitivity DNA Kit for Bioanalyzer (Agilent Technologies #5067- 4626) and sequenced on Illumina HiSeq2500 in single read mode with the read length of 75 nt following manufacturer's instructions. After adapter trimming and UMI extraction, reads were aligned to mature *Ae. aegypti* miRNAs downloaded from miRBase (release 22, [\[13\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/YIRwQ)) and to each synthetic small RNA's passenger, loop, and guide sequences using bowtie2 in 'very-sensitive-local' mode. (We assumed, based on the design of the synthetic small RNAs, that they are processed as miRNAs; however, it remains possible that they are instead processed as endogenous small RNAs (esiRNA) or some other small RNA species.) Custom Perl scripts were

used to quantify the number of reads that mapped to each target. 5 out of 8 target sites were reliably detected at TPM values between 2 and 91. Sites 3, 5 and 7 were not detected above background in either of the transgenic samples (Table S1). Correlation coefficients of TPM values between WT and transgenic animals were calculated in [R\[14\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/eDBK7). Differential expression analysis was performed with R package DESeq2 using two factor design (design= \sim feeding + genotype). TPM values and MA plots were generated with R package ggplot2 (SI Appendix Fig. S3). Quantification data are shown in SI Appendix Table S1. All sequencing data can be accessed at NCBI SRA (accession ID: SRP150144; BioProject ID: PRJNA475410).

RT-PCR confirmation of anti-ZIKV transgene expression

To assay synthetic small RNA expression in mosquitoes, total RNA was separately extracted from 50 dissected midguts and 6 carcasses (midguts and heads removed) of Higgs WT and ZIKV-C non blood fed females, as well as 30 dissected midguts and 6 carcasses (midguts and heads removed) of Higgs WT and ZIKV-C females 24 hours post blood-feeding using the Ambion mirVana mRNA Isolation Kit (ThermoFisher Scientific #AM1560). Following extraction, total RNA was treated with Ambion Turbo DNase (ThermoFisher Scientific $\#AM2238$). RNA was then converted to cDNA using RevertAidTM H Minus First Strand cDNA Synthesis Kit (ThermoFisher Scientific #K1631) using a mix of oligo(dT)₁₈ and random hexamer primers. PCR was then performed on the resulting cDNA using standard procedures. To confirm presence of synthetic small RNA transcripts, primers 959.S7 and 959.S8 were used to amplify a fragment from the 5'UTR region of the carboxypeptidase A promoter (downstream of the transcription start site) to the loop-guide strand region of small RNA 1. As a positive control, primers 959.S10 and 959.S11 were used to amplify a short sequence of the *Actin1* gene (AAEL011197)[[15\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/Y3j7). Expression of the anti-ZIKV transgene transcript was observed in both TZIKV-C midgut and carcass tissues regardless of mosquito blood meal state, but was completely absent in Higgs WT mosquito tissues (SI Appendix Figure S4), while *Actin1* positive control transcripts were present in all samples. PCR products were sequenced to confirm product identity. All primer sequences are listed in SI Appendix Table S7.

ZIKV Infection of Mosquitoes, Virus Determination and Longevity

All experiments were performed under biosafety level 3 (BSL-3) conditions in the insectary at the Australian Animal Health Laboratory. Insectary conditions were maintained at 27.5℃ and 70% in relative humidity with a 12hr light/dark cycle. ZIKV strain FSS13025 (Cambodia 2010, Genbank KU955593[\)\[4\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/yklmC) or PRVABC59 (Puerto Rico 2015, GenBank KU501215) were used for viral challenge experiments. Both belong to the Asian/Pacific/American clade and were passaged once in C6/36 cells and twice in Vero cells before using for mosquito infections. WT (Higgs strain for TZIKV-C experiments, Liverpool strain for TZIKV-A, B, and D experiments) and transgenic (confirmed by red fluorescence in the eye) mosquitoes were infected with ZIKV as previously described [\[16\].](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/JwEY1) Briefly, female mosquitoes were challenged with a chicken blood

meal spiked with $ZIKV$ (TCID₅₀ 10^6 /mL) through chicken skin membrane feeding. Blood-fed female mosquitoes were sorted and maintained at standard conditions in an environmental cabinet with sugar *ad libitum*. For infection rate and virus titer, mosquito midguts were collected at 4 dpi. For dissemination and transmission rate, mosquito saliva, midguts, and carcasses were collected at 14 dpi. Mosquito saliva was used to determine viral titers using $TCID_{50}$ assay on Vero cells. Midguts and carcasses were used to determine presence of viral RNA using RT-qPCR against ZIKV NS5 [\[16\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/JwEY1) (SI Appendix, Table S7). Mosquito viral challenge, processing, saliva testing, and molecular analyses of infection and dissemination were carried out as previously described [\[16\].](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/JwEY1) ZIKV infection rate was defined by the number of midguts (4 dpi) found positive for viral nucleic acid over tested midguts. Similarly, the dissemination rate was calculated by the number of carcasses (14 dpi) testing ZIKV positive by qPCR. Transmission rate was defined by the number of $TCID_{50}$ positive saliva samples over the number tested. For each experiment, data from three replicates was pooled. The average $TCID_{50}$ values were compared by two-tailed unpaired t test. To measure fitness after infection, blood-fed ZIKV-infected females were quickly sorted out after CO₂ anaesthesia and housed in waxed cardboard cup 250 ml containers with a maximum of 25 mosquitoes. Mosquitoes were maintained at standard conditions for 14 days with 10% sugar solution *ad libitum*. Dead mosquitoes were counted daily. Females surviving at day 14 were marked as censored (status=0) in the database for survival analysis, which was performed using the GraphPad Prism software (GraphPad Software, La Jolla California, USA). The Mantel-Cox test was used to compare the survival of infected mosquitoes at 14 dpi.

Generation of *w***Mel** *Wolbachia* **Line and Infection Assay**

Eggs of *Ae. aegypti* infected with the *Wolbachia* strain *w*Mel were obtained from the World Mosquito Program (Prof. Scott O'Neill, Monash University). Higgs mosquitoes infected with *w*Mel were generated by crossing *w*Mel+ females with males from the Higgs line, and the resulting offsprings were used for ZIKV infections experiments. At the end of the experiment, *Wolbachia* infection status of these mosquitoes was tested using PCR with primers specific for *w*Mel detection [\[17\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/W8Wzf) (SI Appendix, Table S7). The PCRs indicated presence of *w*Mel in >90% of mosquitoes, and only results from these positive mosquitoes were used for further analysis.

Mouse Transmission Assays

All experiments were performed under biosafety level 3 (BSL-3) conditions in the insectary at NHRI. Insectary conditions were maintained at 29°C and 80% relative humidity with a 12 hr light/dark cycle, and mosquitoes were maintained as previously described [\[18\].](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/vrdhl) For experimental assays, transgenic anti-TZIKV-C mosquitoes were outcrossed to WT (Higgs strain) for a generation to obtain heterozygotes. Non-transgenic sibling mosquitoes from the above cross were used as Higgs WT controls. ZIKV strain PRVABC59 (Puerto Rico 2015, GenBank KU501215) was used for viral challenge experiments. It was obtained from the Taiwan Center

for Disease Control, and maintained/amplified as previously described [\[18\].](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/vrdhl) For direct ZIKV infection, 7–10 day-old female TZIKV-C and Higgs WT mosquitoes were inoculated with 200 plaque forming units (pfu) of ZIKV by thoracic injection as previously described [\[18\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/vrdhl) and maintained under standard housing conditions for 7 days prior to their use in assays. Infection via artificial membrane blood feeding was carried out as described above, and infected mosquitoes were then maintained under standard conditions for 14 days prior to their use in transmission assays. Viral titers were measured at 7 dpi (for thoracic injection infections) or 14 dpi (for membrane blood feeding infection) by plaque assay as previously described [\[18,19\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/qN3xz+vrdhl). Briefly, $2x10⁵$ cells/well of Vero cells (a kind gift from Dr. Guann-Yi Yu) were incubated for one day (in serum-free 1xDMEM medium (HyClone, SH30022), at 37℃) before being infected with ZIKV. At two hours post infection, unbound virus particles were removed, and cells were gently washed by PBS and overlaid with 3 ml of 1xDMEM medium containing 2% FBS (Gibco, 16000044), 10 mM HEPES, 10nM sodium pyruvate, 2mM L-Glutamine (Gibco, 25030081), 1x Penicillin-Streptomycin (Gibco, 15140122), and 1% Methyl cellulose (Sigma, M0512-250G). The infected cells were then incubated at 37 \degree C and 5% CO₂ for 4 days until plaque formation. Cells were fixed and stained with 0.5mL crystal violet/methanol mixed solution (ASK®Gram Stain Reagent) for 2 hours, and washed with H₂O. Number of plaques was then calculated, and viral titers were determined as plaque forming units per mosquito and were compared by one-way ANOVA.

All mouse-related experiments were conducted in compliance with the guidelines of the Laboratory Animal Center of NHRI. The animal protocol (NHRI-IACUC-105111) was approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of NHRI, according to the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (NRC 2011). Management of animal experiments and animal care and use practices of NHRI have been accredited by the AAALAC International. *Stat1*-/- (C57BL/6 background) mice were provided by Dr. Guann-Yi Yu (NTU, Taiwan). Both male and female mice between the ages of 11-12 weeks were used in the study.

Mosquito-mediated ZIKV mouse infections were carried out as previously described [\[18,19\]](https://paperpile.com/c/3oAvMn/qN3xz+vrdhl). Briefly, mice were anesthetized with Ketalar (100 mg/Kg, Pfizer, New York, NY) via intraperitoneal injection, and their ventral surfaces were shaved. Then, mice were placed on top of a polyester mesh covering a mosquito-housing cage that permitted female mosquitoes to take a blood meal. Female mosquitoes were starved for 10h before they were allowed to take blood meals from mice, and each mouse was fed on by 6–11 mosquitoes. Mouse body weight and mortality were then recorded for 6-30 days. Mouse weights were compared by the Mann Whitney test to evaluate for significant weight loss.

Fitness Assessment and Conditions

To determine if the anti-ZIKV transgene confers a fitness cost, several fitness parameters were evaluated in Higgs WT and TZIKV-C mosquitoes. For these experiments, homozygous TZIKV-C mosquito stock obtained after 12 generations of inbreeding (see above) and the Higgs WT stock utilized to obtain transgenic lines were used. Evaluation of all experimental and control replicates were performed simultaneously. Insectary conditions were maintained at 28℃ and 70-80% in relative humidity with a 12hr light/dark cycle. To assess larval to pupal development time, eggs were vacuum hatched and larvae were distributed into pans (50 larvae per pan) containing 2.5L of ddH₂O and 0.6mL of fish food slurry. To determine the development time of TZIKV-C and Higgs WT control mosquitoes, 4th instar larvae were sorted according to fluorescence phenotype and reared until pupation. Pupae were collected and counted every day until no pupae were left. To assess female fertility and fecundity, 90 TZIKV-C or Higgs WT females were mated to 20 Higgs WT males in a cage. After four days, females were blood fed and individually transferred into plastic vials filled with water and lined with egg paper. After three days, egg papers were collected, and eggs were counted and vacuum hatched in 9-ounce plastic cups. Starting on the fourth day, larvae were counted every day until no larvae were present. Female fecundity refers to the number of eggs laid per female, and fertility reflects the number of eggs hatching to produce larvae. To measure male mating success, fecundity, and fertility, one TZIKV-C or Higgs WT male was mated to five Higgs WT females in a single cup filled with water and lined with egg paper. Three days post blood meal, cups were checked for the presence of eggs, which were collected, counted, and hatched. Hatched larvae were then counted every day until no larvae were present. Male mating success was calculated as the percentage of single male outcrosses that produced larvae. Fecundity was measured as the number of eggs laid per cup; fertility was determined by the number of hatching larvae in each cup. To asses wing length as a proxy for body size, images of TZIKV-C and Higgs WT mosquito wings were taken with a Leica M165 FC microscope (Leica Microsystems). Wing length measurements were done by using the measurement tool on the Leica Application Suite X, measuring from the axial incision to the intersection of the R 4+5 margin. Finally, to assess mosquito longevity, equal numbers of male and female TZIKV-C or Higgs WT mosquitoes were placed in medium sized cages (in triplicate). Mosquitoes that died were counted and removed daily until all mosquitoes had died. Statistical analyses were performed using the GraphPad Prism software (GraphPad Software, La Jolla California, USA). Means were compared using unpaired t tests with Welch's correction except for male mating success (no Welch's correction). Analyses of mosquito survivorship utilized the Mantel-Cox test. *P*-values>0.05 were considered non-significant.

Confirmation of Transgene Zygosity

To molecularly confirm zygosity of transgenic mosquitoes, mosquito heads were homogenised using bead-beater for DNA extraction in 30 ul extraction buffer (1x Tris-EDTA, 0.1M EDTA, 1M NaCl and 2.5 uM proteinase K), and incubated at 56°C for 5 minutes and then at 98°C for 5 minutes. PCR was then performed on each line to detect the presence of the transgene by pairing a *piggyBac* primer with a genomic primer as follows: primers 1018.S46 and 991.5R2 for TZIK-A, 1018.S26 and 991.3F2 for TZIK-B, 1018.S8 and 991.5R1 for TZIK-C, and 1018.S50

and 991.3F2 for TZIK-D (SI Appendix Table S7). To determine zygosity, we amplified the WT locus of each transgenic line using corresponding forward and reverse primers listed in SI Appendix Table S7. WT mosquitoes (Higgs strain for TZIKV-C assays, Liverpool for TZIKV-A, B, and D assays) served as controls to ensure that the WT locus was successfully amplified in each genetic background. A PCR kit (ThermoFisher Scientific #F553S) with 57°C annealing temperature and standard protocols was used for all PCRs.

Data Availability Statement

All sequencing data associated with this study are available from NCBI sequence read archive (SRA) accession ID: SRP150144; BioProject ID: PRJNA475410. Complete annotated plasmid sequence and DNA is publically available at Addgene (plasmid #104968). Transgenic mosquitoes will be made available by corresponding author upon request.

SI Appendix Figures and Tables

SI Appendix Fig. S1. small RNA target site conservation between ZIKV strains H/PF/2013, FSS13025, and PRVABC59. small RNA target sites between the ZIKV strain used for small RNA target selection (H/PF/2013, top sequence) and the strains used for mosquito challenges (FSS13025, middle sequence; PRVABC59, bottom sequence) are highly conserved, with only one base pair mismatch in one target site in each strain (shown in red).

SI Appendix Fig. S2: Effect of anti-ZIKV transgene on ZIKV titres in four independent mosquito lines. ZIKV virus titres in wildtype (Liverpool WT and Higgs WT), anti-ZIKV transgenic mosquito lines (TZIKV-A, TZIKV-B, TZIKV-C, TZIKV-D) following a blood meal infected with a Cambodian (FSS13025) are shown. ZIKV genome equivalent from mosquito midgut (day 4 post infection) of Liverpool WT, Higgs WT, and transgenic mosquitoes were determined using real-time RT-qPCR and calculated using previously published methods. Circles represent WT mosquitoes; black diamonds represent anti-ZIKV Hm transgenic mosquitoes; red colored diamonds represent anti-ZIKV Ht transgenic mosquitoes. Horizontal bars represent the mean virus titer. Mantel-Cox test was used for statistical analysis. **represents p<0.001.

SI Appendix Fig. S3. Differential expression analysis of small RNAs from Higgs WT and TZIKV-C mosquito midguts. TPM (transcripts per million) values for transgenic versus Higgs WT animals without a blood meal (**A**) and 24 hours after a blood meal (**B**) are shown. Expression of synthetic small RNAs does not affect expression levels of endogenous miRNAs significantly (correlation coefficients of 0.9761 and 0.9757, respectively). MA (log2FoldChange vs. baseMean) (**C**) plot demonstrates that detected synthetic small RNAs are strongly differentially expressed between Higgs WT and transgenic animals.

SI Appendix Fig. S4. RT-PCR analysis on non blood fed and 24-hr post blood fed Higgs WT and TZIKV-C female midgut and carcass samples. A 195bp region of the anti-ZIKV transgene, from the 5'UTR region of the carboxypeptidase A (AAEL010782) promoter to the loop-target site-1 region, was amplified to confirm expression of the anti-ZIKV transgene (odd numbered lanes, labeled in red). A 175bp region of the *Actin1* gene was amplified as a control (even numbered lanes, labeled in white). Higgs WT midgut (lanes 1 and 2), Higgs WT carcass (lanes 3 and 4), TZIKV-C midgut (lanes 5 and 6), and TZIKV-C carcass (lanes 7 and 8) samples were assayed in both a non blood fed (top panel) and 24-hr blood fed (bottom panel) state. All PCR products were sequenced to confirm product identity.

Daily survival of mosquitoes

SI Appendix Fig. S5. Survivorship curve of Higgs WT and TZIKV-C male and female mosquitoes. The x-axis indicates the number of elapsed days after the start of the experiment, and the y-axis indicates the percent of mosquitoes surviving on each elapsed day. Each line represents accumulated results from 120-130 adult mosquitoes combined from 3 biological replicates.

SI Appendix Table S1. Quantification of endogenous and engineered small RNA expression on read and UMI (Unique Molecular Identifiers) levels in Higgs WT and TZIKV-C mosquitoes prior to blood meal (NBF) and 24 hr post blood feeding (PBM). Both raw read or UMI counts and normalized TPM (Transcripts Per Million) values are shown.

SI Appendix Table S2. Anti-ZIKV transgene effect on ZIKV infection, dissemination, and transmission rates. ZIKV infection rates were quantified in the midgut at 4 days post infection (dpi). Dissemination rates were quantified in both the midgut and carcass at 14 dpi. Transmission rates were calculated by measuring prevalence of ZIKV in the saliva at 14 dpi. For each experiment, data from three replicates is pooled.

SI Appendix Table S3. Fitness evaluation of Higgs WT and TZIKV-C mosquitoes. Comparisons of several fitness parameters (leftmost column) between Higgs WT (second column from left) and TZIKV-C mosquitoes (third column from left) suggest that there are few significant differences (rightmost column) between the two groups, indicating that the anti-ZIKV transgene does not have a major impact on mosquito fitness.

SI Appendix Table S4. The survivorship of ZIKV-infected TZIKV-C mosquitoes at 14 days post infection (dpi). Higgs WT, Higgs *w*Mel+, and TZIKV-C mosquitoes infected with ZIKV strain FSS13025 or PRVABC59 were assessed for survival at 14 dpi. The mean percentage±SEM of surviving mosquitoes and number of mosquitoes tested (in parentheses) are reported. No assay was performed for Higgs *w*Mel mosquitoes infected with strain FSS13025. The Mantel-Cox test was used to compare the survival of infected Higgs WT, Higgs *w*Mel (for PRVABC59 strain only), and TZIKV-C mosquitoes.

SI Appendix Table S5. Primer sequences and small RNA target sites utilized to generate synthetic small RNA constructs used in this study. Self annealing primers are listed first, and consist of forward and reverse target site sequences flanking the stem loop region of the synthetic small RNA. Primers amplifying flanking regions, BsaI cut sites, and multiple cloning sites are listed below.

SI Appendix Table S6. Primers used to assemble plasmid OA959C (the anti-ZIKV transgene).

Supplementary Table S7. Diagnostic primers used for inverse PCR (iPCR) assays, zygosity confirmation, ZIKV NS5 RT-qPCR, and *w*Mel infection confirmation.

SI Appendix References

- 1. Akbari OS, Chen C-H, Marshall JM, Huang H, [Antoshechkin](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/KvfZ5) I, Hay BA. Novel synthetic Medea selfish genetic elements drive population [replacement](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/KvfZ5) in Drosophila; a theoretical exploration of [Medea-dependent](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/KvfZ5) population suppression. ACS Synth Biol. 2014;3: 915–928.
- 2. Chen C-H, Huang H, Ward CM, Su JT, Schaeffer LV, Guo M, et al. A synthetic [maternal-effect](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/D9mSp) selfish genetic element drives population [replacement](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/D9mSp) in Drosophila. Science. 2007;316: 597–600.
- 3. Baronti C, Piorkowski G, Charrel RN, Boubis L, [Leparc-Goffart](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/rJ5O8) I, de Lamballerie X. Complete coding sequence of zika virus from a French polynesia outbreak in 2013. Genome [Announc.](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/rJ5O8) 2014;2. [doi:](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/rJ5O8)[10.1128/genomeA.00500-14](http://dx.doi.org/10.1128/genomeA.00500-14)
- 4. Ladner JT, Wiley MR, Prieto K, Yasuda CY, Nagle E, Kasper MR, et al. [Complete](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/yklmC) Genome [Sequences](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/yklmC) of Five Zika Virus Isolates. Genome Announc. 2016;4. doi[:10.1128/genomeA.00377-16](http://dx.doi.org/10.1128/genomeA.00377-16)
- 5. Engler C, Kandzia R, [Marillonnet](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/EKLOI) S. A one pot, one step, precision cloning method with high [throughput](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/EKLOI) capability. PLoS One. 2008;3: e3647.
- 6. Li M, Bui M, Yang T, Bowman CS, White BJ, Akbari OS. Germline Cas9 [expression](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/MK6iI) yields highly efficient genome engineering in a major worldwide disease [vector,Aedes](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/MK6iI) aegypti. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2017;114: [E10540–E10549.](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/MK6iI)
- 7. Gibson DG, Young L, Chuang R-Y, Venter JC, Hutchison CA 3rd, Smith HO. [Enzymatic](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/tqWGt) assembly of DNA [molecules](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/tqWGt) up to several hundred kilobases. Nat Methods. 2009;6: 343–345.
- 8. Moreira LA, Edwards MJ, Adhami F, Jasinskiene N, James AA, [Jacobs-Lorena](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/O7eZA) M. Robust gut-specific gene expression in transgenic Aedes aegypti [mosquitoes.](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/O7eZA) Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2000;97: [10895–10898.](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/O7eZA)
- 9. Kokoza V, Ahmed A, Wimmer EA, Raikhel AS. Efficient [transformation](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/VTP2M) of the yellow fever mosquito Aedes aegypti using the piggyBac transposable element vector [pBac\[3xP3-EGFP](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/VTP2M) afm]. Insect Biochem Mol Biol. 2001;31: [1137–1143.](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/VTP2M)
- 10. Li M, Bui M, Yang T, White B, Akbari O. Germline Cas9 [Expression](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/8daqL) Yields Highly Efficient Genome [Engineering](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/8daqL) in a Major Worldwide Disease Vector, Aedes aegypti [Internet]. 2017. [doi:](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/8daqL)[10.1101/156778](http://dx.doi.org/10.1101/156778)
- 11. Akbari OS, Antoshechkin I, Amrhein H, Williams B, Diloreto R, Sandler J, et al. The [developmental](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/ixuUu) [transcriptome](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/ixuUu) of the mosquito Aedes aegypti, an invasive species and major arbovirus vector. G3 . 2013;3: [1493–1509.](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/ixuUu)
- 12. Huang AM, Rehm EJ, Rubin GM. Recovery of DNA [sequences](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/yWuj2) flanking P-element insertions in

Drosophila: inverse PCR and plasmid rescue. Cold Spring Harb Protoc. 2009;2009: [db.prot5199.](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/yWuj2)

- 13. Kozomara A, [Griffiths-Jones](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/YIRwQ) S. miRBase: annotating high confidence microRNAs using deep [sequencing](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/YIRwQ) data. Nucleic Acids Res. 2014;42: D68–73.
- 14. Team RC. R: A language and [environment](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/eDBK7) for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. 2013. ISBN [3-900051-07-0;](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/eDBK7) 2014.
- 15. Dzaki N, Ramli KN, Azlan A, Ishak IH, Azzam G. [Evaluation](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/Y3j7) of reference genes at different [developmental](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/Y3j7) stages for quantitative real-time PCR in Aedes aegypti. Sci Rep. 2017;7: 43618.
- 16. Duchemin J-B, Mee PT, Lynch SE, Vedururu R, Trinidad L, Paradkar P. Zika vector [transmission](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/JwEY1) risk in temperate Australia: a vector [competence](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/JwEY1) study. Virol J. 2017;14: 108.
- 17. Joubert DA, Walker T, Carrington LB, De Bruyne JT, Kien DHT, Hoang NLT, et al. [Establishment](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/W8Wzf) of a Wolbachia [Superinfection](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/W8Wzf) in Aedes aegypti Mosquitoes as a Potential Approach for Future Resistance [Management.](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/W8Wzf) PLoS Pathog. 2016;12: e1005434.
- 18. Kuo Y-P, Tsai K-N, Luo Y-C, Chung P-J, Su Y-W, Teng Y, et al. [Establishment](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/vrdhl) of a mouse model for the complete [mosquito-mediated](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/vrdhl) transmission cycle of Zika virus. PLoS Negl Trop Dis. 2018;12: [e0006417.](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/vrdhl)
- 19. Hsu AY-H, Wu S-R, Tsai J-J, Chen P-L, Chen Y-P, Chen T-Y, et al. [Infectious](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/qN3xz) dengue vesicles derived from CD61+ cells in acute patient plasma exhibited a diaphanous [appearance.](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/qN3xz) Sci Rep. [2015;5:](http://paperpile.com/b/3oAvMn/qN3xz) 17990.