



# Asgardias' Technocracy Space Nation Seeks 15 Million Faithful

It's not just U.S. Technocrat billionaires who want to colonize outer space. A Russian billionaire's Asgardia plan is to create the first 'space nation' to offer citizenship and passports. □ TN Editor

A Russian billionaire is ramping up plans to save humanity by creating a floating "garden of gods" in the Solar System for 15 million lucky people.

Igor Ashurbeyli is the Azeri-Russian tycoon behind Asgardia, a project launched three years ago to establish "permanent peace in space". In 2017, the group sent a satellite - Asgardia-1 - into low-Earth orbit and declared sovereignty over the space it occupies. The outlandish ambitions do not cease there, but "Head of Nation" Dr Ashurbeyli has sought to prove this is more than just a sci-fi fantasy.

Earlier this year, Asgardia unveiled plans to build a fleet of "cosmic Noah's arks" orbiting the Earth, at a cost of roughly £100billion a piece

for its micro-nation.

Former Liberal Democrat MP Lembit Opik was elected as the chairman of the Parliament of Asgardia during its first session in Vienna, Austria.

He is part of a British core involved in the project, that also includes Tory Brexiteer Nigel Evans who chairs the Asgardian parliament's foreign affairs committee, and Philip Appleby, a former Ministry of Defence official and police officer who has been appointed Minister of Safety and Security.

Mr Opik told iweekend: "Lots people are building rockets, Asgardia is about building the society to go with them.

"At some point in the future, ordinary people are going to have to inhabit space and we are not going to build a social infrastructure from mission control.

"It has to be built by consent - painstakingly and comprehensively.

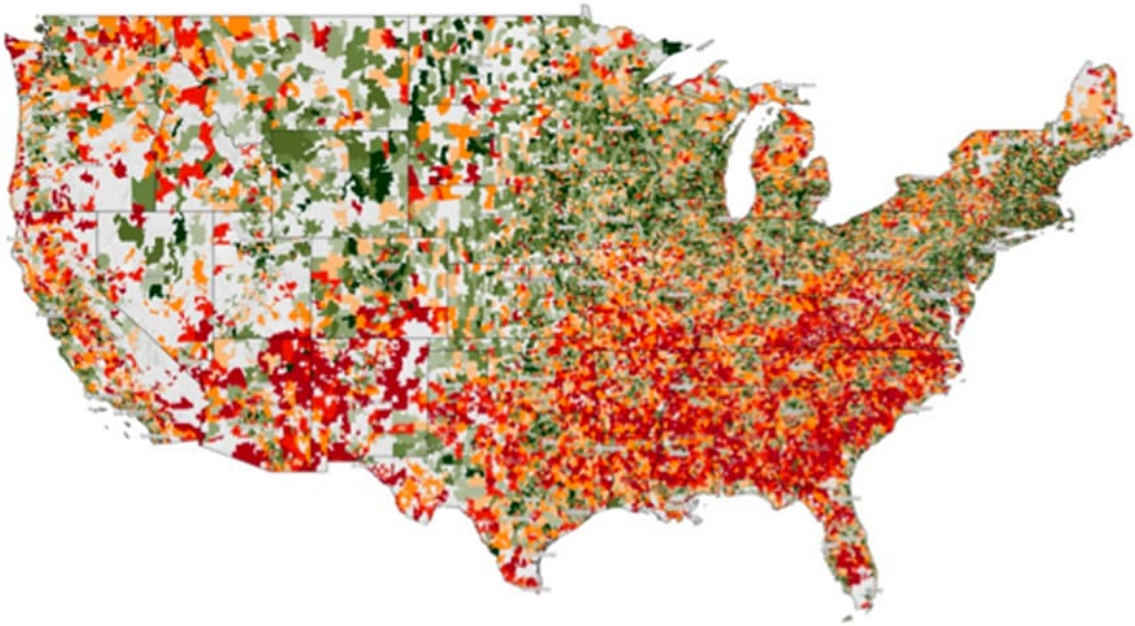
"We have to decide the rules and methods on everything from burials to taxation, from marriage to procreation.

"My political back catalogue tells you that I'm no stranger to dealing with the unexpected, it has never bothered me to be on the far side of convention and target for suspicion of derision.

"We are getting some big names from science and commerce and it creates a virtuous circle - the more people take us seriously, the more serious it will get."

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# Rockefeller Foundation Launches 'National Opportunity Zones Academy'

TN was correct in pegging Opportunity Zones as a vehicle to railroad Sustainable Development in underserved areas in cities and counties. Now, Rockefeller Foundation has jumped in with a major new program.

[Catherine Austin Fitts Interviews Patrick Wood On Technocracy and Opportunity Zones](#)

[Opportunity Zones: A Technocrat Deception To Plunder America](#)

[8,700 'Opportunity Zones' In U.S. Targeted For Smart City Infrastructure](#)

□ TN Editor

The Rockefeller Foundation and Smart Growth America (SGA) today announced the launch of the National Opportunity Zones Academy, which will help cities drive sustainable growth in Opportunity Zones by attracting socially responsible investment. Five cities have been selected

to participate in the Academy including Chicago, Greater Miami and the Beaches, Pittsburgh, Seattle, and Norfolk, VA.

The Foundation will award a \$400,000 grant to Smart Growth America (SGA) to fund the Academy. SGA's technical assistance team and its LOCUS program will work directly with each participating city to create place based, community-led approaches to developing sustainable growth and development strategies that help transform selected Opportunity Zones into economically-thriving and socially-inclusive, walkable neighborhoods. The announcement of the Academy follows the Foundation's launch of its [Community Capacity Building Initiative](#) which will benefit vulnerable communities through Opportunity Zones created in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

"Communities have the potential to be completely transformed by the billions of dollars in capital created by the Opportunity Zone tax credit - but only if we make a deliberate effort to ensure investments benefit those the policy is intended to serve," said Dr. Rajiv J. Shah, President of The Rockefeller Foundation. "The Opportunity Zones Academy will prioritize mobilizing capital and helping cities meet the needs of those who live and work in Opportunity Zones."

The Opportunity Zones Academy will give member cities access to three core benefits. These include 1) bespoke technical assistance to increase local capacity to achieve equitable development in Opportunity Zones; 2) socially responsible investors through curated introductory events and online investment portals, and 3) sharing best practices through peer-to-peer learning amongst the five participating cities. Smart Growth America and its LOCUS coalition have deep experience working with and empowering communities to be more economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable, and will leverage that expertise to develop and facilitate this program.

"Today's news of five cities banding together illustrates the urgency of community leaders accessing the tools, resources and data they need to ensure equitable, sustainable and community-beneficial investment in their Opportunity Zones," said Calvin Gladney, President and CEO of Smart Growth America, a national non-profit dedicated to ensuring that

all Americans can share in the prosperity that comes from building livable, walkable and healthier places. “Through our LOCUS national coalition of triple-bottom line developers and investors, we will leverage our thought leadership on Opportunity Zones to co-create practical win-win solutions with this impressive roster of cities—examples that countless other community leaders, investors and elected officials can follow.”

### **About The Rockefeller Foundation**

The Rockefeller Foundation advances new frontiers of science, data, policy, and innovation to solve global challenges related to health, food, power, and economic mobility. As a science-driven philanthropy focused on building collaborative relationships with partners and grantees, The Rockefeller Foundation seeks to inspire and foster large-scale human impact that promotes the well-being of humanity throughout the world by identifying and accelerating breakthrough solutions, ideas and conversations. For more information, sign up for our newsletter at [rockefellerfoundation.org](http://rockefellerfoundation.org) and follow us on Twitter @RockefellerFdn.

### **About Smart Growth America and LOCUS**

Smart Growth America envisions a country where no matter where you live, or who you are, you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient. We empower communities through technical assistance, advocacy, and thought leadership to realize our vision of livable places, healthy people, and shared prosperity. LOCUS, a program of Smart Growth America, is a national coalition of real estate developers and investors who advocate for sustainable, equitable, walkable development in America’s metropolitan areas. LOCUS has been a leader in the Opportunity Zone space and produced the [National Opportunity Zones Ranking Report](#) that identifies which Opportunity Zones are positioned to bring positive social, environmental, and economic returns, by ranking all Opportunity Zones by their smart growth potential and current social equity. Second, the report includes policy recommendations for communities to ensure that development results in more walkable places that are healthy, prosperous, equitable and resilient. Learn more



at [www.smartgrowthamerica.org/program/locus/](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/program/locus/).

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## **GMO Fail: Mosquitoes Breed Despite Kill-Switch Gene**

The first generation were supposed to die, but some didn't and now the entire mosquito population is at risk of unintended consequences. "Oops" from Technocrat scientists is *not* acceptable. □ TN Editor

An experimental trial to reduce the number of mosquitoes in a Brazilian town by releasing genetically modified mosquitoes has not gone as planned. Traces of the mutated insects have been detected in the natural population of mosquitoes, which was never supposed to happen.

The deliberate release of 450,000 transgenic mosquitoes in Jacobina, Brazil has resulted in the unintended genetic contamination of the local

population of mosquitoes, according to new research [published](#) last week in Scientific Reports. Going into the experimental trial, the British biotech company running the project, Oxitec, assured the public that this wouldn't happen. Consequently, the incident is raising concerns about the safety of this and similar experiments and our apparent inability to accurately predict the outcomes.

The point of the experiment was to curb the spread of mosquito-borne diseases, such as yellow fever, dengue, chikungunya, and Zika, in the region. To that end, Oxitec turned to OX513A—a proprietary, transgenically modified version of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. To create its mutated mosquito, Oxitec took a lab-grown strain originally sourced from Cuba and genetically mixed it with a strain from Mexico.

The key feature of these bioengineered mosquitoes is a dominant lethal gene that (supposedly) results in infertile offspring, known as the F1 generation. By releasing the OX513A mosquitoes into the wild, Oxitec hoped to reduce the population of mosquitoes in the area by 90 percent, while at the same time not affecting the genetic integrity of the target population. The OX513A strain is also equipped with a fluorescent protein gene, allowing for the easy identification of F1 offspring.

Starting in 2013, and for a period of 27 consecutive months, Oxitec released nearly half a million OX513A males into the wild in Jacobina. A Yale research team led by ecologist and evolutionary biologist Jeffrey Powell monitored the progress of this experiment to assess whether the newly introduced mosquitoes were affecting the genes of the target population. Despite Oxitec's assurances to the contrary, Powell and his colleagues uncovered evidence showing that genetic material from OX513A did in fact trickle to the natural population.

“The claim was that genes from the release strain would not get into the general population because offspring would die,” Powell, the senior author of the new study, said in a [press release](#). “That obviously was not what happened.”

That genetic material from OX513A has bled into the native species does not pose any known health risks to the residents of Jacobina, but it is the

“unanticipated outcome that is concerning,” said Powell. “Based largely on laboratory studies, one can predict what the likely outcome of the release of transgenic mosquitoes will be, but genetic studies of the sort we did should be done during and after such releases to determine if something different from the predicted occurred.”

Indeed, lab tests conducted by Oxitec prior to the experiment suggested that around 3 to 4 percent of F1 offspring would survive into adulthood, but it was presumed these lingering mosquitoes would be too weak to reproduce, rendering them infertile. These predictions, as the new research shows, were wrong.

To conduct the study, Powell and his colleagues studied the genomes of both the local *Aedes aegypti* population and the OX513A strain prior to the experiment in Jacobina. Genetic sampling was performed six, 12, and 27 to 30 months after the initial release of the modified insects. The researchers uncovered “clear evidence” showing that portions of the genome from the transgenic strain had “incorporated into the target population,” the authors wrote in the new study. The project resulted in a “significant transfer” of genetic material—an amount the authors described as “not trivial.” Depending on the samples studied, the researchers found that anywhere from 10 to 60 percent of mosquitoes analyzed featured genomes tainted by OX513A.

As the researchers note in the study, the Oxitec scheme worked at first, resulting in a dramatic reduction in the size of the mosquito population. But at the 18-month mark, the population began to recover, returning to nearly pre-release levels. According to the paper, this was on account of a phenomenon known as “mating discrimination,” in which females of the native species began to avoid mating with modified males.

The new evidence also suggests that some members of the F1 generation were not weakened as predicted, with some individuals clearly strong enough to reach adulthood and reproduce. The mosquitoes in Jacobina now feature genetic traits from three distinct mosquito populations (Cuba, Mexico, and local), which is a potentially troubling development. In nature, the intermingling of traits between different species can sometimes provide an evolutionary boost in a phenomenon known as



“hybrid vigor.” In this case, and as the researchers speculate in the new study, the added genetic diversity may have resulted in a more “robust” species, a claim Oxitec denies.

Powell and his team tested the hybrid mosquitoes to determine their susceptibility to infection by Zika and dengue. The researchers found “no significant differences,” as noted in the study, but “this is for just one strain of each virus under laboratory conditions,” and that “under field conditions for other viruses the effects may be different.” It’s also possible that the intermingling of genetic traits might have also introduced entirely new characteristics, such as increased resistance to insecticides, the authors warned in the new paper.

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