

Horizon - United Basic Income

- white paper -

Abstract

Horizon.NGO is the first and only decentralized platform for uniting basic income initiatives worldwide. We are an independent non-profit organization offering a standardized basic income token implemented on the Ethereum blockchain. This simply means that, through the Horizon crypto tokens, anyone can start collecting a valuable basic income for himself. At the same time, through the unique Horizon Factory smart contract, every organization, official institute and company is able to create an independent basic income service for his community only. This is easy and quick to set up (through Horizon's online DApp), affordable (very affordable when compared to custom development), thoroughly tested and continuously maintained by the Horizon team.

Executive Summary

Horizon.NGO is the first decentralized platform for uniting universal basic income initiatives. Built on Ethereum, each Horizon token holder is paid out in Ether, Ethereum's cryptocurrency which currently has a market capitalization of approximately \$30 billion (September 4, 2018).

With an established market value since 2014 and a large community supporting the blockchain project, Ethereum was the most logical choice to integrate with. Payouts in Ether are meaningful since the cryptocurrency already has a substantial value (1 ETH \approx \$285 on September 4, 2018) and it is accepted as a payment method by a growing number of merchants.

Through the so-called “Horizon Factory”, organizations are able to create their own independent basic income service, for their target audience only. This service is an instance of the global Horizon basic income service (so with the same functionalities), but it is completely controlled by the organization itself. To fuel Horizon’s main financial reserve, needed to pay out its own token holders, each organization pays a small fee for creating a new instance and contributes a wee percentage for each deposit to its own basic income service. The benefits for all are clear. Organizations only need to invest a fraction of what it would normally cost to build an automated basic income service and, by combining the efforts of like-minded initiatives, Horizon.NGO is able to build a larger financial reserve for its token holders. The higher the reserve, the more people who can build a basic income for themselves.

To step into Horizon’s public basic income service, one or more Horizon tokens can be acquired. A one-time fee per token guarantees an infinite and immutable benefit. Regular payouts to all token holders are made possible by the financial reserve, additionally fueled by donations and partnerships both inside and outside the crypto world. Needless to say that one of Horizon’s major tasks is to keep increasing the reserve, so that more tokens can be released and more people can gain higher payout amounts. On a side note, it might be interesting to know that no Horizon tokens will be directly distributed to Horizon team members. They will also have to acquire tokens through the public channels.

In the end, this project is all about trying to create an opportunity for a large group of people to find a way to a more meaningful life. Every bit of financial support could help lead the way to new insights, less worries and hopefully more smiles and happiness. Rome wasn’t built in a day, but if we follow Ray Kurzweil’s recent prediction, a universal basic income will be common throughout the developed world by the early 2030’s and globally by the end of the same decade. We aim to make this happen!

Universal Basic Income

When researching the concept of a universal basic income, a lot of information can be found on the internet. According to Wikipedia⁽¹⁾, it’s a kind of welfare system in which every community member unconditionally receives a regular sum of money. It should be totally independent of any other income and its intention is to meet a person’s basic needs. Obviously, this is not an easy task. Where does this money come from? A growing number of pilot projects, mainly by governments, are trying to figure this out. At the same time, these projects are investigating the effects of such a welfare system on many different levels. Pilots in India, Finland, Canada and partially in The Netherlands have raised discussions about the pros and cons of universal basic income, but the general consensus stays more or less the same: solutions need to be found, urgently, to prevent people from further sliding into poverty.

Basic Income UK⁽²⁾ gives us 11 reasons to support a basic income:

1. It will help us rethink how & why we work.
2. It will contribute to better working conditions.
3. It will downsize bureaucracy.
4. It will make benefit fraud obsolete.
5. It will help reduce inequalities.
6. It will provide a more secure and substantial safety net.
7. It will contribute to less working hours and better distribution of jobs.
8. It will reward unpaid contributions.
9. It will strengthen our democracy.
10. It will make a fair redistribution of technological advancement.
11. It will end extreme financial poverty..

It might sound very promising and some (perhaps all) goals might be within reach with a basic income, but before we get there, quite a few battles will need to be fought. Luckily, a growing number of entrepreneurs, like Richard Branson⁽³⁾ and Elon Musk⁽⁴⁾ for example, are supporting the concept of a universal basic income, so they might inspire others. However, with supporters also come adversaries, so where exactly lies the path to follow? This is what needs to be figured out and Horizon intends to contribute to this exploration.

Horizon's approach is as follows:

1. Build a platform to unite basic income initiatives worldwide.
2. Grow a strong user base of organizations fueling Horizon's basic income platform.
Additionally, make partnership deals to further strengthen its financial reserve.
3. Pay out Horizon token holders crypto assets which are worth something.

Build, grow and pay. That's easily said, but what a challenge! Therefore, Horizon.NGO has also been looking for additional uses of its platform. Opportunities have been found and are now part of Horizon's strategic plans.

Blockchain Technology

The Horizon platform uses a set of smart contracts written in Solidity, Ethereum's primary programming language. Ethereum⁽⁵⁾ is an open-source platform that lets anyone build and use decentralized applications that run on innovative blockchain technology.

Quoting Wikipedia⁽⁶⁾, "A blockchain is a continuously growing list of records, called blocks, which are linked and secured using cryptography. Each block typically contains a cryptographic hash of the previous block, a timestamp and transaction data. By design, a blockchain is inherently resistant to modification of the data. It is an open, distributed ledger that can record transactions

between two parties efficiently and in a verifiable and permanent way. For use as a distributed ledger, a blockchain is typically managed by a peer-to-peer network collectively adhering to a protocol for inter-node communication and validating new blocks". Simply said, Horizon uses secure and immutable transactions, executed by a well-established platform run by thousands of active nodes⁽⁷⁾ (more than 15,000 on September 4, 2018).

In summary, Horizon.NGO chose to integrate with Ethereum because:

- It is the most mature smart contract platform openly available for public use.
- In its years of existence, it has grown a large community supporting the platform.
- Its network is run by thousands of active nodes worldwide, making it extremely secure.
- Its cryptocurrency (Ether) has already reached a substantial market value.
- It is maintained by a professional team of highly skilled developers.
- Ether is already accepted as a payment method.

In other words, to build a decentralized basic income service, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. No new blockchain needs to be developed when a proven smart contract platform such as Ethereum is already publicly available. Also, there is absolutely no need to create yet another cryptocurrency for paying out basic income token holders when a valuable cryptocurrency like Ether is available and widely adopted by a rapidly growing community. Instead, Horizon focuses on using a solid system to write smart contracts for its basic income services.

Horizon.NGO also looks ahead and thinks about the future. Therefore, Horizon smart contracts make use of MiniMe tokens, compatible with the ERC20 token standard. It is a primarily technical standard that dictates a number of rules that a token must implement. ERC20 tokens are used frequently with ICO (Initial Coin Offering) and crowdfunding initiatives. Some sources claim that already more than 20,000 distinct ERC20 tokens have been created for multiple purposes. ERC20 tokens can be traded on many different exchanges, increasingly powered by the decentralized 0x protocol⁽⁸⁾.

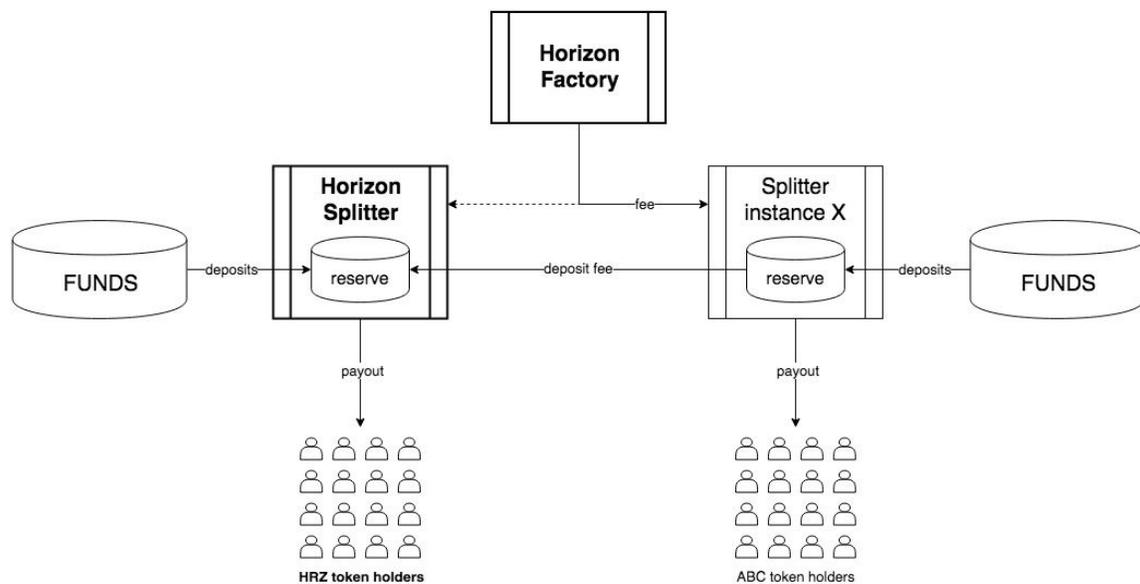
To manage Horizon's codebase, we make use of the Truffle⁽⁹⁾ framework. Precise unit tests are performed to ensure the code has the correct and expected behavior. For linting (to analyze the source code, flagging programming errors, bugs, stylistic errors, and suspicious constructs) both ESLINT⁽¹⁰⁾ and Solium⁽¹¹⁾ are used. Our front ends use the standard web3⁽¹²⁾ API implemented through Truffle's Drizzle libraries.

Horizon Factory

Horizon aims to **unite basic income initiatives** worldwide. To this purpose, Horizon offers a platform where basic income services can be easily set up. This works through the so-called "Horizon Factory" which, at each request, **creates a new smart contract** based on Horizon's

main Splitter (used for distributing the collected funds to its token holders). The procedure is as easy as filling in a simple form and confirming an Ethereum transaction. The newly created basic income service runs independently from the main service and is completely controlled by its creator, of course.

By using the Horizon Factory, there is **no need to invest a lot of money** into the development of a custom basic income service. To support Horizon, a one-time fee is charged for creating a new Splitter instance and a wee percentage (used only to fuel the financial reserve to pay out Horizon's token holders) is kept from each deposit to this instance. In other words, the more initiatives that make use of Horizon's platform, the more people can benefit from Horizon's main basic income service. For each party involved, it is a win-win deal.



When creating a new Splitter instance, the following data needs to be provided:

- name of the new basic income service
- period length of regular payouts to token holders
- address of the token used for calculating payout amounts
- the amount of Ether in Wei⁽¹³⁾ that is paid out periodically per token
- the maximum number of tokens allowed per account

As the Horizon platform works with ERC20 compatible tokens, already created tokens can also be used when deploying a new basic income service. To enable this option, it is only required to register the existing ERC20 token at the Horizon Factory. At the same time, through the Factory, new tokens can be easily created without an additional fee. These tokens are completely owned and controlled by its creators and work exactly as Horizon's MiniMe tokens. This means that tokens created through the Horizon Factory can be used for multiple purposes, so they are

absolutely not limited to a basic income service deployed on the Horizon platform. This opens a variety of possibilities and makes one think about endless services that can be combined with Horizon's basic income service!

Horizon Splitter

Independent basic income services created by the Horizon Factory are called instances of the "Horizon Splitter". These components are called splitters because they "split" or divide the collected deposits among all token holders.

Each Splitter instance (also the main one) collects Ether on its Ethereum address. Deposits can be made by simple transactions, sending Ether from any account to the address of the Splitter instance. Deposits to Splitter instances created by the Factory contribute a small percentage (default is 1%) to Horizon's main splitter. Obviously, collected funds remain in each splitter's "financial reserve" and are only used to pay out its own token holders. The token that is used for calculating the payout amounts is defined when creating a new Splitter instance at the Factory and cannot be changed afterwards.

Collecting income from a Horizon splitter is easy. Only a simple function needs to be called, nothing more. When called, the splitter checks the following:

- How many tokens does the caller possess?
- How many periods does the caller need to be paid out?
- For each period, how much Ether needs to be paid for each token?

Splitter tokens can be distributed in many different ways. As Horizon.NGO only controls Horizon tokens, distribution of Splitter instance tokens is managed entirely by the splitter owner. Horizon tokens can be purchased, or obtained through Horizon partners. Horizon tokens are tradable, so they can be sold or donated to others. In general, an Ethereum account can hold one or more tokens, limited by the maximum set in the Splitter instance.

When creating a new Splitter instance at the Factory, a fixed period length is also defined. Its unit is number of Ethereum blocks. The time needed for processing a single block on Ethereum is approximately 15 seconds (can be lower or higher), so if one is aiming for payout periods of 30 days, the splitter's period length should be 172,800. For each period someone holds one or more tokens, he or she is entitled to a payout amount equal to the number of tokens in each period times the payout value in the corresponding period. The splitter keeps track of periods already paid and only pays out periods when its financial reserve is big enough to pay out all token holders in that period.

The collect income function can be called at any time and returns the Ether that the caller is entitled to and that can be paid out by the splitter. Important to know is that calling this function also involves a transaction cost on Ethereum, which increases with the number of periods that still need to be paid. In other words, even when this cost should not be significant, it's a good idea to collect the basic income on a regular basis.

To balance out fluctuations in the Ether exchange value, the splitter variable used for storing the amount of Ether to be paid out per token can be changed for each period. As most of us still need fiat currencies for paying monthly bills, this is a welcome feature and keeps a relatively good balance in payout amounts. Currently, this variable is updated manually, but future Horizon updates could use an automated service for this, like an oracle⁽¹⁶⁾, for example.

Horizon tokens

Basic Income tokens

Horizon's ERC20 compatible MiniMe⁽¹⁴⁾ tokens will NOT be distributed through an Initial Coin Offering⁽¹⁵⁾. This would be a completely wrong decision, as we first want to establish a financial reserve big enough to pay out all token holders for at least one year. In this regard, it is likely that the first Horizon tokens will become available through Horizon partnerships, although a very limited amount will be offered for purchase to early bird followers. Important to mention is that Horizon team members will have to acquire the tokens through the same channels as everyone else, so nobody gets advantaged above others.

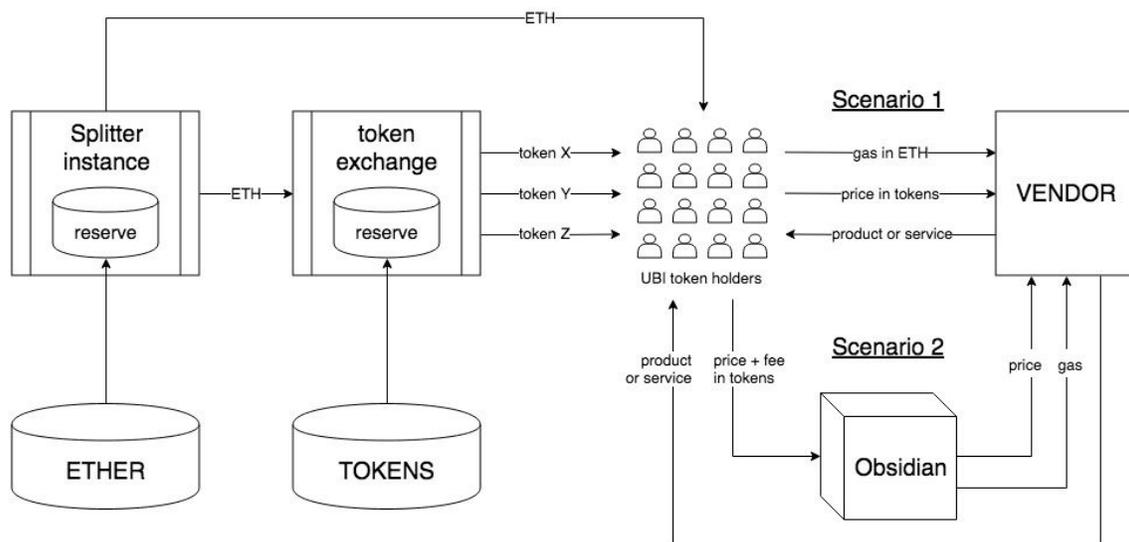
When Horizon tokens will be distributed to the public, we will offer them through a decentralized exchange, making use of the 0x protocol for example. Based on the financial reserve built until then, we will set a price per token for the sell orders on the exchange. As the target is to have as many people as possible benefit from Horizon's basic income service, several strategies will be used to create the sell orders, so token hoarding becomes quite hard. Also, the Splitter will only accept a maximum number of tokens per account. This value can (and should) increase, so total payout values can grow over time.

Distribution of tokens used by Splitter instances is, of course, entirely controlled by their creator. Horizon.NGO might build some tools to assist with this, although a growing number of platforms, like Wings⁽¹⁷⁾ and Aragon⁽¹⁸⁾, already provide these kinds of services.

Together with the fees for setting up new Splitter instances through the Horizon Factory, Horizon token sales are collected to support further development of the platform. In a next phase, these funds will be controlled by the Horizon DAO.

Internal token exchange

Through Horizon's internal token exchange, it will be possible to distribute ERC20 tokens next to Ether. These tokens could represent anything, like food or clothes, to be exchanged locally for real food and clothes, not only supporting people in their basic needs, but also boosting local commerce and incentivizing peer-to-peer collaboration. In this case, the distributed funds can be directed to what they have been intended for, e.g. buying food and clothes in stores that accept the respective tokens. The splitter token exchange could also be used to send out vouchers, for example, or to distribute local coins. Endless possibilities can be thought of.



However, when someone wants to buy something with tokens, some Ether is still required to cover Ethereum's transaction fee. To eliminate this need, Horizon will be contributing to a project called Obsidian. Through Obsidian, it will be possible to pay for products or services with tokens only! Gas costs will be covered by Obsidian participants who accept to be paid a fee in tokens, as a reward for handling the transaction.

Transaction tokens

As Horizon's basic income tokens are not intended (and therefore not foreseen) to be heavily traded, we will also offer another kind of token that can be used for daily transactions.

For each transaction, these tokens will transmit a micro contribution to a financial reserve, preferably used for paying out basic income token holders. This reserve could be the main Horizon reserve or a reserve used by a certain Splitter instance.

By charging a (micro) fee for each transaction, financial wealth can be continuously built inside a basic income service, before redistributing these funds among token holders. In other words, redistribution of wealth⁽¹⁹⁾ through daily financial transactions will also be possible through the Horizon platform.

The timeline for Horizon's transaction tokens has not been set yet and will partially depend on partnerships that will require such a token in combination with a basic income service. Multiple talks in this direction have been set up already and will hopefully soon lead to one or more successful partnerships.

Horizon DAO

For transparency purposes, we will build a Decentralized Autonomous Organization⁽²⁰⁾ that will manage all Horizon smart contracts. This basically means that all decisions regarding Horizon's governance will be voted for by Horizon stakeholders and recorded on Ethereum's blockchain. Most likely, a custom DAO will be built, unless existing solutions prove to be compatible with Horizon's framework.

Partnerships

To continuously fuel Horizon's reserve, many partnerships need to be forged with organizations and companies both inside and outside the crypto world. Important to mention is that not only basic income initiatives are eligible to create Splitter instances. In practice, any kind of platform that runs a recurring payout service (for paying out investors, employees, affiliates, ...) can make use of Horizon's platform! Some examples: governments that want to set up a basic income pilot in (part of) their country, impact investment⁽²¹⁾ firms who add this option for supporting global sustainability to customized impact solutions, companies that offer tokenized services to clients or shareholders, affiliate programs that wish to add a charity aspect to their platform, ... And herein lies Horizon's real strength. In offering a multipurpose set of smart contracts that connects institutions and industries with a universal basic income service that aims to unite initiatives to the benefit of its own token holders.

To each partner, Horizon.NGO offers support and help with custom integrations. We can assist with custom smart contract, web3⁽²²⁾, UI and mobile development. Depending on requirements, we can work on-site or remotely. Our head office is located in Germany, not too far from Berlin, from where the Horizon project is managed. Team members are spread across the globe, but many of them reside in Europe.

Horizon partners can be found on Horizon's website and each partner can use a Horizon badge in their communications, to let everyone know that they help fuel a global basic income initiative worth supporting.

Mining

As the Horizon platform makes use of Ether (Ethereum's cryptocurrency), it is not possible to mine⁽²³⁾ Horizon tokens. Instead, we are investigating whether or not to invest in a mining farm solution that could help power the project. As competition is high and profits low (especially with high electricity costs), this might not be a good path to follow, but at least we need to know about the options. We have a few ideas to try and make this profitable, but further research is required before we can come to conclusions. In the meantime, we invite current crypto miners to consider sending a regular contribution of their profits to the Horizon Splitter. Every cent counts and only by working together we can create a successful platform.

Another idea to increase the available financial reserve is through crypto market making⁽²⁴⁾, but this path needs to be thoroughly investigated as well. However, we will never make decisions that will put the available funds at risk.

Core team

President

Dirk von Heinrichshorst⁽²⁵⁾ is an engineer in electronics and telecom, but has been working in IT his entire career. He spent many years developing his web development skills before starting his own company in Belgium, serving top clients and building innovative prototype applications. After 6 years of leading this company, he switched his focus to business development and started working as a consultant before moving to Germany. By then, he was introduced to blockchain technologies, which seriously caught his attention. For the past five years, he has been setting up blockchain projects with expert developers. Currently, next to the Horizon platform, this includes a dedicated reputation blockchain built on Hyperledger⁽²⁶⁾.

As a business concept developer, Dirk is very much interested in topics such as machine learning, artificial intelligence, cryptocurrencies, blockchain applications, distributed autonomous organizations, open government, virtual countries, the economy of the common good, open source, open hardware, the internet of things, co-creation, permaculture, self-provision and even quantum energy devices. Together with his love for arts, photography and movies, it has led him on a path filled with exciting discoveries.

To summarize his skill set, Dirk has:

- 25 years of experience in analytical thinking and problem solving
- 15 years in web development, concept development and visionary thinking
- 15 years in business development and customer relations
- 10 years in consultancy, diplomacy and leadership
- 5 years in blockchain technologies

Lead Developer

From an early age on, **Elliott Teissonniere**⁽²⁷⁾ has been interested in computer science. His passion for cybersecurity, for which he analyzed advanced threats and built cutting edge tools, led him towards blockchain and smart contract development at a time when hardly anybody had heard about Bitcoin. Relatively quickly, he became the CTO of Bitnation⁽²⁸⁾, "the world's first Decentralized Borderless Voluntary Nation". For Bitnation, Elliott designed complex frameworks to support a reputation system as well as a DAO⁽²⁹⁾. As a co-author of Bitnation's white paper, he detailed the inner workings of the systems he developed.

After leaving the Bitnation team, Elliott started to work as a blockchain consultant, helping companies transition to this new technology. He also released the world's first DApp⁽³⁰⁾ for couples to get married on the Ethereum blockchain.

Strongly focused on artificial intelligence, trustless systems, mesh networks, cryptography and security, Elliott is helping to pave the way for the upcoming digital revolution.

Ambassadors

As partnerships are extremely important for the success of the Horizon platform, we decided to work together with multiple ambassadors, who not only spread the word about our United Basic Income service, but also help us forge strategic partnerships across the world. Needless to say that we still need extra help in this department, so feel free to apply for a position as a Horizon ambassador, joining Amin Rafiee⁽³¹⁾, a passionate blockchain advocate who already joined our team from the very start.

Future plans

Along the way, depending on which partnerships will be established as we move forward, we will focus on developing the internal token exchange, transaction tokens, and adding another token standard, ERC721⁽³²⁾, to use with the Horizon splitters. Right now, we are already investigating the possibilities and examining the advantages these kind of tokens might have over regular ERC20 tokens. Reducing Ethereum fees is part of our objectives here. Today

however, ERC721 tokens are not supported heavily by exchanges yet, but this will probably change in the near future. It's always a good idea to plan ahead.

As for Horizon's mobile application, we still need to enter the design phase. Its primary purpose will be to collect Horizon tokens and the basic income they produce. At the same time, we want the app to be configurable for independent initiatives (who have created a Splitter instance through the Horizon factory).

Spreading the word about Horizon, the "United Basic Income" platform, is a never-ending task, of course. We will work hard to show that, by combining forces, we can achieve so much more than just on our own. Feel free to join!

More info

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