



# Horizon Technology Finance Corp. (HRZN)

Updated May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 by Nikolaos Sismanis

## Key Metrics

<b>Current Price:</b>	\$11.65	<b>5 Year CAGR Estimate:</b>	11.4%	<b>Market Cap:</b>	\$279.3 M
<b>Fair Value Price:</b>	\$12.64	<b>5 Year Growth Estimate:</b>	2.0%	<b>Ex-Dividend Date:</b>	06/16/2022
<b>% Fair Value:</b>	92%	<b>5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:</b>	1.6%	<b>Dividend Payment Date:</b>	07/15/2022
<b>Dividend Yield:</b>	10.3%	<b>5 Year Price Target</b>	\$13.95	<b>Years Of Dividend Growth:</b>	N/A
<b>Dividend Risk Score:</b>	F	<b>Retirement Suitability Score:</b>	C	<b>Rating:</b>	Buy

## Overview & Current Events

Horizon Technology Finance Corp. is a BDC (Business Development Company) seeking to provide venture capital to small and medium-sized companies, mainly in the life sciences, technology, and healthcare-IT sectors, which account for around 43%, 41%, and 2% of its portfolio, respectively. The company has been able to generate attractive risk-adjusted returns through directly originated senior secured loans and additional capital appreciation through warrants, featuring a last-twelve-month annualized portfolio yield of 14.9%. The company has exceeded the typical industry average IRR of around 10% from its loan coupons by engaging in commitment fees, guidance fees, and potential equity rights, maximizing its total yield. Horizon Technology has gross investment income of around \$60 million annually and is based in Farmington, Connecticut

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, Horizon released its Q1 results for the period ending March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Total investment income grew 7.5% year-over-year to \$14.2 million primarily due to growth in interest income on investments resulting from an increase in the average size of the debt investment portfolio. However, net investment income per share (ISS) declined to \$0.26, five cents lower compared to Q1-2021. This was due to a 16.6% increase in total expenses and a higher share count. Net asset value (NAV) per share came in at \$11.68, compared to \$11.56 in the previous quarter, nonetheless.

After paying its monthly distributions, Horizon's undistributed spillover income as of December 31<sup>st</sup> was \$0.47 per share, indicating a considerable cash cushion. The portfolio remained relatively stable, holding 86 businesses at the end of the quarter. Management reassured investors of dividend stability going forward by declaring its three forward monthly dividends at a rate of \$0.10. Based on Horizon's current portfolio composition, we forecast FY2022 ISS of \$1.33.

## Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2027
<b>IIS<sup>1</sup></b>	\$1.41	\$1.38	\$1.11	\$1.25	\$1.48	\$1.07	\$1.20	\$1.52	\$1.18	\$1.41	<b>\$1.33</b>	<b>\$1.47</b>
<b>DPS</b>	\$1.35	\$1.38	\$1.38	\$1.38	\$1.38	\$1.20	\$1.20	\$1.20	\$1.25	\$1.25	<b>\$1.20</b>	<b>\$1.20</b>
<b>Shares<sup>2</sup></b>	8.5	9.6	9.6	11.2	11.5	11.5	11.5	13.5	17.5	20.0	<b>21.9</b>	<b>50.0</b>

Horizon's investment results have been quite stable over the years, despite many of its peers in the sector suffering due to the oversupply of cheap financing. Lower market rates have caused BDCs to keep refinancing their loan assets at gradually lower rates, damaging their investment results. However, Horizon's niche operations that require more unusual expertise in industries like biotech have maintained their higher ROIs amid a lack of cheap loans for such risky sectors, including early-stage tech companies. As its successful due diligence record has made possible, the company has maintained quite stable distributions, paid out monthly, providing smooth capital returns to its investors. Horizon's sectors of interest are likely to remain quite high-risk and capital-hungry, which, combined with management signaling towards a robust investment pipeline in a dynamic market, guides us to forecast a 2% growth in its IIS/share and stable distributions in the medium term. While there's a chance DPS grows, we chose to remain prudent and forecast no DPS growth over the next five years. That said, special dividends of \$0.05 were paid both in FY2020 and in FY2021.

<sup>1</sup> Investment Income per share

<sup>2</sup> Share count is in millions.

Disclosure: This analyst has no position in the security discussed in this research report, and no plans to initiate one in the next 72 hours.



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## Valuation Analysis

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Now	2027
Avg. P/E	11.0	9.7	13.1	8.4	7.1	9.7	9.4	9.9	9.3	11.3	<b>8.8</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Avg. Yld.	10.8%	9.9%	9.6%	13.8%	11.8%	10.9%	11.4%	10.2%	10.2%	7.8%	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>

Horizon's yield is one of the highest amongst its peers, as its shares are currently trading at a discount compared to the industry. This is quite odd in our opinion considering the company's resilient reinvestment yield, which has averaged close to 15% despite the industry's downward trajectory. As industries like biotech and tech startups are usually free cash flow negative during their early stages, we expect financing in the sector to continue being expensive. We have set our fair P/E at 9.5, expecting the stock's valuation to converge towards its historical average. The stock is more or less fairly valued from a NAV perspective point of view, though a small premium is deserved amid Horizon's unique qualities.

## Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

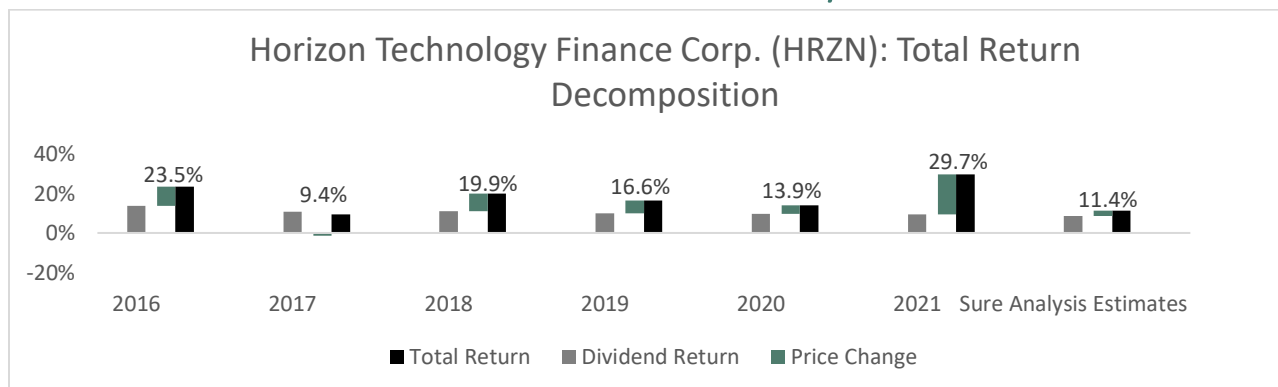
Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2027
Payout	96%	100%	124%	110%	93%	112%	100%	79%	106%	89%	90%	<b>82%</b>

Horizon's distributions have remained well-covered over the past few years, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, we estimate that a dividend cut is unlikely based on its ongoing performance. The company's competitive advantage lies in its team's expertise to identify the most promising companies in risky sectors, which requires professional knowledge and experience beyond finance. So far, this perk has stood solid, as the company's results have outperformed the rest of its peers, many of which were forced to cut their distribution due to increased market pressure. Horizon's stable performance over the years is also visible in its stock price, which is typically less volatile than its BDC peers. With \$202.2 million of investment capacity available, investors and creditors alike are confident for the company's future. Additionally, the company has a healthy debt to equity ratio of 0.90, within Horizon's 0.8-1.2 targeted leverage range.

## Final Thoughts & Recommendation

Horizon's type of business model is currently facing increased pressure, as seen by many of its peers. However, the company has been able to leverage its niche expertise in tech and life sciences, demanding a higher return on its investments, which has resulted in shy-high investment yields. We believe that Horizon is one of the highest-quality BDCs amongst its competitors. Implanting the possibility of modest valuation headwinds, we forecast annualized returns of around 11.4%. Accordingly, we rate shares a buy at current prices. The stock's monthly distributions are likely to be appreciated by income-oriented investors.

## Total Return Breakdown by Year



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## Income Statement Metrics

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Revenue</b>	7.09	20.50	14.97	-1.76	12.40	14.90	21.30	14.78	10.33	33.27
<b>SG&amp;A Exp.</b>	3.48	5.26	3.46	3.24	2.87	3.04	3.41	3.45	3.75	4.69
<b>Net Profit</b>	3.51	15.43	11.86	-4.91	9.59	13.01	19.50	11.00	6.36	27.78
<b>Net Margin</b>	49.5%	75.3%	79.2%	279.3%	77.3%	87.3%	91.5%	74.4%	61.6%	83.5%
<b>Free Cash Flow</b>	6.50	36.68	-31.33	52.31	-14.84	-12.06	-51.41	-4.02	-25.28	-75.99
<b>Income Tax</b>	0.24	0.16	---	-0.09	0.03	0.03	0.24	0.34	0.22	0.40

## Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Total Assets</b>	263.74	225.20	280.90	239.25	234.15	266.75	344.00	197.81	407.16	513.95
<b>Cash &amp; Equivalents</b>	25.34	8.42	20.77	37.14	6.59	12.59	6.47	1.30	19.50	38.05
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	127.90	86.95	121.15	100.06	99.07	132.49	159.95	67.93	194.56	268.62
<b>Accounts Payable</b>	3.32	3.32	3.98	3.45	3.46	3.46	4.67	0.00	5.79	6.37
<b>Long-Term Debt</b>	122.34	81.75	114.95	95.60	94.08	126.85	152.05	64.57	185.8	257.61
<b>Total Equity</b>	135.84	138.25	159.75	139.19	135.08	134.26	184.06	129.88	212.60	245.34
<b>LTD/E Ratio</b>	0.90	0.59	0.72	0.69	0.70	0.94	0.83	0.50	0.87	1.05

## Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Return on Assets</b>	1.4%	6.3%	4.7%	-1.9%	4.1%	5.2%	6.4%	6.8%	1.7%	6.0%
<b>Return on Equity</b>	2.5%	11.3%	8.0%	-3.3%	7.0%	9.7%	12.3%	11.6%	3.2%	12.1%
<b>ROIC</b>	1.4%	6.5%	4.8%	-1.9%	4.1%	5.3%	6.5%	6.9%	1.7%	6.2%
<b>Shares Out.</b>	9.58	9.62	11.18	11.54	11.52	11.53	13.48	7.61	17.53	20.03
<b>Revenue/Share</b>	0.74	2.13	1.34	-0.15	1.08	1.29	1.58	1.94	0.59	1.66
<b>FCF/Share</b>	0.68	3.81	-2.80	4.53	-1.29	-1.05	-3.81	-0.53	-1.44	-3.79

Note: All figures in millions of U.S. Dollars unless per share or indicated otherwise.

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