

# Building Blocks Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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- **Q: What blockchain technology does Building Blocks use?**

A: BB currently uses Ethereum.

- **Q: Is BB a public or private blockchain?**

A: We did our January 2017 proof-of-concept on a public chain. However, for transaction throughput, cost, and privacy reasons, we switched to a BB is a private-permissioned implementation. This has enabled us to increase our transaction throughput beyond current (or anticipated near future) needs, our on-chain transaction cost is zero, our block (confirmation) time is 5 seconds, and the information on BB is only visible to its approved humanitarian members.

- **Q: Who are the members of BB?**

A: The current full members of BB are UN Women and WFP.

- **Q: Who can become a member of BB?**

A: BB is available for free membership to UN organizations and INGOs with a demonstrated history of the do-no-harm principles.

- **Q: Is WFP the sole owner of BB?**

A: No. BB is 100% equally owned, operated, and governed by its members.

- **Q: How is BB governed?**

A: BB is governed by its Governance Framework, which, among other things, outlines membership criteria, onboarding/offboarding members, data protection/privacy, network maintenance, intellectual property rights, and dispute resolution.

- **Q: What does it mean to be a full member of BB?**

A: It means joining the BB network, signing and abiding by its Governance Framework, and running validator nodes.

- **Q: Is BB open source?**

A: No, BB is currently not open source. However, BB is built on many open-source components, and all smart contracts on BB are available for free to other BB members to ensure investments into the network synergistically benefit all members, and we avoid re-creating the same features multiple times in disparate systems.

- **Q: Will BB be open source at some point?**

A: There are two components to this question.:

1. Open-sourcing code is resource intensive and requires dedicated commitment. A successful open-source project has a community around it where the public suggests and develops new features. The project team must promptly review the suggestions and developments. If this does not happen, the community around the project dies, and the open-source initiative fails. BB currently lacks the resources to open-source the project. With available resources, WFP is open to open-sourcing its contributions to BB.
2. Making open-sourcing all applications on BB a mandatory requirement may prevent some organizations that, for whatever reason, cannot open-source their contributions from joining BB. Given that currently, the two full members of BB are UN Women and WFP, we hope to wait until the project has gained critical mass after several additional organizations join the network, and put the open-sourcing everything question be voted through BB's governance body. That said, each member organization retains IP rights over their contributions and is completely free to open source their contribution to BB.

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- **Q: How much does BB cost?**

A: Joining BB is free. Furthermore, all smart contracts on the network are free for all members. WFP additionally makes its BB infrastructure, backend, and mobile application code available for free to all members. The only mandatory requirement for BB members is to operate validator nodes with the same specification, which currently cost about USD 400 on Amazon Web Services (AWS). In addition to the validator nodes, organizations typically need a backend to connect to the blockchain. However, the size/complexity of each organization's backend (and, therefore, the associated costs) depends on the size/complexity of that organization's operations. Finally, if organizations wish to modify or add new features to BB, they will have to pay for it. However, each organization pays any computing services or software development costs directly to the organization(s) it works with for those services. No BB member directly pays any other BB member (or BB as a project) anything.

- **Q: How does data protection/privacy work on BB?**

A: To the extent possible, BB aims to follow a privacy-by-design approach. For example:

- The absolute minimum data points needed (e.g., common pseudonymous identifiers) are used.
- No sensitive information such as names, birth dates, or biometrics is recorded on chain.
- The assistance data on the BB blockchain is at the high-level category level (e.g., food) and not the granular item level (e.g., rice). This enables inter-organizational coordination at the assistance category level while mitigating the risk of re-identification through the availability of too granular data.
- As a private network, even the pseudonymous data is only available to approved humanitarian organizations.

- **Q: Does BB use cryptocurrencies?**

A: No, to date, BB has not used cryptocurrencies.

- **Q: Does BB undergo cybersecurity assessments?**

A: Yes, BB undergoes regular complete cybersecurity and smart contract assessments by industry-leading specialized firms. The latest such review was performed in August 2022.

- **Q: Are there things BB does not aim to do?**

A: BB aims to focus on areas where inter-organizational collaboration adds the most value. For example, coordinating collective assistance to the same people and ensuring they can redeem their assistance as seamlessly and conveniently as possible. BB does not currently aim to be an ERP, beneficiary registration, biometrics, analytics, or M&E system, for example. Instead, it seeks to be a meta-system that connects humanitarian organizations and provides a 360 view of the people served.